Stourbridge
CHRONICLE
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FREE PARKING TO JINGLE TILLS

Report by Richard Guttridge

SHOPPERS across Dudley will be offered free parking in the run up to Christmas – but could face increased charges after a review by council bosses.

Money coming in from its car parks is one of the main spending pressures affecting the cash-strapped authority, which must save £20 million by 2018. Dudley Council is on course to make £700,000 less than expected from parking fees over the next three years.

Bosses at the authority say the shortfall is due to a reduction in the number of parking spaces across the borough.

The council announced it would offer free parking during the run up to Christmas to bring more visitors into borough towns.

Free parking will be offered all day on December 5, 12 and 19 in all of the council-run car parks.

Bosses said they had taken the decision in an effort to boost trade across the borough.

Free parking will also be offered after 4pm on Saturday November 21, 28 and December 5 to coincide with the annual Christmas lights switch-on events in Halesowen, Brierley Hill and Stourbridge.

Incentive

In terms of the review, opposition councillors have called for parking fees in the borough to be reduced as an incentive for people to spend in the borough's towns and villages rather than elsewhere.

Currently, its costs motorists either 60p or 70p to park on council car parks in the borough for an hour and £1.20 or £1.40 for two hours. A stay of over three hours costs up to £3.50.

Tory councillor David Blood, a former finance chief for the council, said an increase in parking fees was a possibility.

He dded: "My belief is there should always be cheap parking, so people use it. This is where the problem occurs for Dudley Council because if you have excessive parking charges, people won't come into Dudley."

A council report said there would be a review in order to 'ensure parking provision encourages access to key retail and economic centres across the borough'.

As a result of the review, the council aims to save £295,000 by 2018.

Cabinet member for environmental services Councillor Hilary Bills said: "The council will be undertaking a review of the borough-wide parking strategy as it is important our parking provision complements the substantial regeneration projects across the borough.

"It will not only look at charging but other issues as well."

COLLABRO LAUNCH FESTIVE LIGHTS AT MERRY HILL

Hands on – popera group Collabro on stage with Father Christmas to switch on the Christmas lights at intu Merry Hill

BRITAIN'S Got Talent winners Collabro helped to switch on the Christmas lights at Merry Hill as thousands of people attended to see the festive season officially get under way at the giant shopping centre.

The Intu-owned complex in Brierley Hill hosted a packed weekend of entertainment for visitors.

Proceedings kicked off at 11am on Saturday with singers and performers taking to the stage set up on the ground floor near River Island.

The event saw Collabro joined by hula hoop specialists Hoop La La and dancing act with a difference Old Men Grooving – all of whom have shot to fame in recent years thanks to Britain's Got Talent.

Birmingham-based vocal group Sons of Pitches, which recently won Gareth Malone's Naked Choir TV choral contest, also delighted the audience with song.

Another regular crowd-favourite Titan the Robot was also on hand to entertain shoppers, instantly becoming top of every child's Christmas list.

The switch-on followed Santa's parade around the centre which started and finished at the main stage ready for the countdown. Parents can now can now book places for children to visit Santa's grotto with slots available up until Christmas Eve.

The centre's opening times are being increased gradually from now until Christmas Day.

The lights were also switched on in Dudley town centre on Saturday. Actor Kascion Franklin, who starred in Lenny Henry's hit BBC drama Danny and the Human Zoo, was given the honour.

LANDMARK

Historic country pub gets a new look

AN HISTORIC pub near Kinver has received a £1.5 million refurbishment, creating 40 jobs.

The Manor House of Whittington, formerly the Whittington Inn, will officially re-open its doors to customers on Friday, November 27. The 14th century building was built for the grandfather of the famous Lord Mayor of London, remembered in pantomimes.

Taken over by pub company Revere, it closed in August for work and the building's distinctive yellow paintwork has been replaced with a grey scheme.

FIRE

Family flee car dashboard blaze

A MOTHER and her two young children were forced to flee their Vauxhall Zafira after the dashboard caught fire.

Crews from Brierley Hill were called to Commonside, Pensnett, at around 10.15am on Monday.

The woman was able to get her children, a two-year-old and a baby, out of the car quickly.

Vauxhall recalled thousands of Zafira models earlier this month after more than 130 owners reported overheating problems behind the glove-box.

MEDICAL

GP practices are in line for closure

TWO GP practices could be axed under plans revealed by health chiefs, sparking concerns among patients.

Lower Gornal Medical Practice wants to close its Masefield Road branch, while Wordsley Green Health Centre wants to shut its Market Street Surgery in Kingswinford.

A public consultation is under way with residents in both areas.

Formal applications will then be considered by the Primary Care Operational Group in January before recommendations are presented to the Primary Care Commissioning Committee.

INSIDE

AMIRA HELPS RAISE £3.7M

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Animal magic ahead with the Willows

The Wind in the Willows actors

ACTORS face all sorts of challenges in the roles they play, but one of the most daunting must surely be to play an animal rather than a human.

Kenneth Grahame's classic tale The Wind In The Willows calls for actors to do just that and from November 26 to 28, you can catch Stourbridge Theatre Company's production of this wonderful story at Stourbridge Town Hall theatre.

Local school teacher, James Collins, plays the part of Mole. "I've always been a huge fan of the novel and in particular of the character, Mole," he said. "He is innocent and vulnerable and he goes on such a personal journey throughout the play.

"As a result his character develops and changes from beginning to end, which as an actor, you couldn't ask for more.

"Although I'm not on all fours, I had to think how a mole would move and hold itself if it were on two feet and slightly humanised, so I took certain characteristics that moles have and put them into my performance," he continued.

"I have really enjoyed the rehearsal process and am now looking forward to performing at the end of November."

Ratty, Mole, Badger and of course Toad of Toad Hall himself who fight the evil weasels who are planning to take over Toad Hall and turn it into executive apartments and a leisure centre! Can our heroes save the day?

Tickets are priced at £7 and £9, performances are 7.30pm nightly and a Saturday Matinee at 2.30pm, call 0870 3207000 or visit www.stourbridgetheatre.co.uk website. Tickets are also available from The French Deli in Coventry Street, Stourbridge.

Cigarette butt littering fines bring in £20,000

DUDLEY Council has made almost £20,000 from fines for people dropping cigarette butts over the last five years.

Enforcement officers have caught a total of 392 people discarding cigarettes since 2010, racking up fines of £19,707.

Those who drop cigarettes in the borough face a £75 penalty, though this is reduced to £50 if it is paid in the first 10 days.

The number of people being fined for the indiscretion has gradually fallen since 2010/11, when on average two people were caught by enforcement officers every week. The 110 fines that year brought in £5,800. That number fell to 76 the following year before going back up to 89 in 2012/13. A total of 59 people were fined in 2013/14.

During 2014/15, 58 fines were issued, totalling £2,810. The majority of people paid up quickly, with the average amount paid being just over £50.

Dudley Council said that as dropping litter is a criminal offence, it will fine people to ensure the borough's streets are kept clean.

Smokers have often bemoaned being hit in the pocket but Dudley councillor Ken Finch said he had no sympathy for people who throw cigarettes on the floor.

Irresponsible

He said: "I don't think £20,000 is enough compared to the amount it costs the council to collect rubbish that is thrown about by irresponsible people. Personally, I feel very passionate about it and I would love to see enforcement in different areas where people are given automatic fines.

"A cigarette is litter, it doesn't matter what it is, it's nothing else but disgusting and until people are fined they are not going to learn."

On its website, Dudley Council warns people littering is a criminal offence and people who do it will face a fine.

Bosses at Dudley Council have been doing their best to clamp down on all kinds of littering across the borough, with the clean-up bill proving costly for the cash-strapped authority.

Last month it was revealed the council spent £45,000 clearing litter left off the highway, with white goods being dumped on 238 occasions.

Dogs can sniff out illegal tobacco

Sniffer dog Scamp with handler Stuart Phillips during an awareness event held in Stourbridge

SNIFFER dogs are leading the crackdown on illegal cigarettes and tobacco in Dudley.

Shoppers have been warned how to spot the signs of counterfeit cigarettes during an awareness drive.

Trading standards officers from Dudley Council have been leading an operation in the borough this week.

Officials with sniffer dogs, trained to sniff out illegal tobacco, were in Brierley Hill as part of the awareness operation which had also been in Stourbridge, Halesowen and Dudley during the week.

It aimed to give the public information about the harm illegal tobacco can cause to individuals, communities and the local economy.

People could see the dogs and watch them sniff out hidden tobacco products during demonstrations.

The council's health boss, Councillor Rachel Harris, said: "These town centre events provided a unique opportunity for people to understand the role of specially trained sniffer dogs and the dangers of illegal tobacco.

"While all smoking kills, illegal tobacco is sold at low prices and without the necessary health warnings which makes it easier for children and young smokers to get hooked. If people see this type of illegal activity they need to inform us straight away."

Call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Black Friday here to stay says boss at Merry Hill

THE owner of Merry Hill shopping centre is expecting another massive surge in customers on Black Friday this year, and says efforts by some firms to backtrack on the cut-price event will fail.

Intu, which bought the controlling half share in Merry Hill in a £400m deal last year, says the Black Friday 'genie' cannot be put back in the bottle.

The UK's largest owner and manager of shopping centres, Intu says it is expecting Black Friday, on November 27, to be a significant day for retailers, despite some saying they are pulling back from the US-inspired discount day.

This week Asda said it would not be part of Black Friday this year, citing 'shopper fatigue'.

Intu, which has 18 shopping centres across the UK, including Intu Trafford Centre and Intu Lakeside, says it is extending opening hours on Black Friday in anticipation of a significant uplift in footfall.

Gordon McKinnon, operations director, said: "Despite some retailers coming out early with their Black Friday plans, the majority are still playing their cards close to their chests. However, from what we are hearing from our retailers and shoppers, Black Friday is definitely here to stay – that genie cannot be put back in the bottle.

"Last year we saw a 30 per cent increase in visitor numbers on Black Friday compared to a normal Friday and are expecting similar numbers this year. In preparation we are extending opening hours and bringing in extra staff."

Road victim, 53, has been named

A MAN who died after he was hit by a car in Netherton has been named as Gary Wroblewski.

Floral tributes have been placed at the scene where Mr Wroblewski, aged 53, was knocked down.

He was found in the road in a critical condition near an abandoned car which had crashed into a billboard at the junction of Cradley Road and Marriott Road on Friday night.

Despite efforts to save him by passers-by carrying out CPR and an ambulance crew assisted by police, he died at the scene.

A 19-year-old local man has been arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving.

West Midlands Police are appealing for witnesses to call 101.

Ned's fans to get new song at Civic

STOURBRIDGE band Ned's Atomic Dustbin will reveal their first new song for 21 years at a special gig. The band have organised the first Kill Your Television Festival at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on December 19, and have written their first song since reforming in 2006.

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Warning as bus routes hit by work on Paradise

BUS services in Dudley will be affected by major changes in Birmingham due to the next phase of the £500 million Paradise Circus redevelopment.

The changes came come into affect on Sunday and officials said they would particularly impact on services from the western side to the city using Broad Street and Colmore Row.

Routes and stops for 11 National Express West Midlands Services using Hagley Road and those travelling to Harborne from Colmore Row will be affected.

Services along Hagley Road affected will be the number nine Birmingham to Stourbridge, the 127 Birmingham to Dudley, the 128 Birmingham to Oldbury, the 129 Birmingham to Merry Hill, the 140 Birmingham to Dudley and the 141 Birmingham to Merry Hill.

Routes would be unchanged going towards the city centre but on exit will go via Colmore Row, Newhall Street, Graham Street, Newhall Hill, Sand Pits Parade, Clement Street, St Vincent Street and Sheepcote Street to rejoin Broad Street.

Timetables will be changed to accommodate the extra time needed to undertake the diversion but service frequency will remain unchanged.

The works will also affect the iGo Hagley Road services including the number 10 Birmingham to Quinton and 10H also Birmingham to Quinton when it comes to exit the city centre.

For further details on changes to routes go to the www.networkwestmidlands.com website.

Fifty complete bishop's course

AROUND 50 people in groups from across the Black Country have received a special certificate marking the completion of a course designed to help them relate their Christian faith to their own life.

They took the Bishop's Certificate course over 12 months with the support of local tutors and covered various subjects within the Christian faith.

They were presented with their certificate by Assistant Bishop, Reverend Michael Hooper.

Bishop Hooper addressed the candidates before presenting them with their certificates.

The group, from parishes across the Black Country, was led by Stourbridge lay minister Kath Davis.

Choral society tribute concert

DUDLEY Choral Society will hold a celebratory 70th anniversary concert at St Marks Church in Pensnett on December 12, also a tribute to its late musical director John Taylor. See www.dudleychoralsociety.co.uk

Cause of fatal crash remains a mystery

Stewart Hollyoake died in road accident

THE cause of a motorbike crash that killed a Dudley father-of-one in Shropshire will probably never be known, an inquest heard.

Stewart Samuel Hollyoake died after colliding with a tree while travelling on the B4368 in Shipton, near Much Wenlock.

His inquest heard that no other vehicle was involved and Mr Hollyoake was confirmed dead at the scene.

As there were no witnesses to the crash, it will be very difficult to fully establish what happened, the hearing was told.

Mr Hollyoake's wife Dawn has paid a loving tribute to a "fantastic husband, father and son".

Mr John Ellery, senior coroner for Shropshire, concluded that Mr Hollyoake, 52, of Weavers Rise, Netherton, died from multiple injuries from the crash on July 30.

Constable Ian Edwards, from West Mercia Police's collision investigation unit based in Shrewsbury, told the hearing that only one vehicle, Mr Hollyoake's motorcycle, had been involved in the collision.

The officer, who attended the scene of the crash and conducted an examination, said it would never be known precisely what caused the crash because there were no witnesses.

Mr Ellery told Mr Hollyoake's family members that his death would have been instantaneous and he would not have suffered. Giving a conclusion that Mr Hollyoake died from multiple injuries due to a road traffic collision, Mr Ellery said: "My condolences go to the family."

Parking bans proposed on roads across borough

RESIDENTS' views on plans to ban drivers from parking along nearly 20 roads across Dudley borough are now being considered ahead of a final decision.

Dudley Council has drawn up proposals for double yellow lines to be introduced on 18 routes across Dudley, Stourbridge, Halesowen, Brierley Hill and Netherton.

A public consultation took place during September and feedback from residents is now been analysed. Decisions will then be made on what schemes to push ahead with while others may be dropped.

The council also looked at making some roads one-way or imposing waiting restrictions to improve traffic flow and to stop some drivers leaving their cars in residential streets for long periods to avoid paying parking charges. Council chiefs said measures were being considered following calls by residents and councillors.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "The public consultation was undertaken as a result of requests from members of the public and ward members. This has now ended and the responses received are being evaluated.

"Those roads which have received no objections will progress to a decision sheet with the aim to be implemented in the next few months. Any proposals which received negative responses will be considered further to determine the best way forward."

Prohibition

If approved, prohibition of waiting orders will be introduced along Vicarage Road, Ridge Street, Bridle Road, The Dell, King Street, High Street and Sherwood Road, all Wollaston.

In Dudley, measures will be put in place along King Street, Tipton Road and Discovery Way, along with Church Road and Hill Street in Netherton.

They would also be introduced in Halesowen, namely Fairmile Road and Hagley Road, and in Braithwaite Drive, Kingswinford.

In Amblecote, they would be placed in Oakfield Close and Brettle Lane, and in Brierley Hill at The Promenade, close to the Merry Hill shopping centre.

Other traffic orders are at Firmstone Street, Halesowen; Vale Street, Upper Gornal, to be made one-way northbound; and Hill Street one-way southbound; plus a 7.5 tonne restriction along Racecourse Lane, Stourbridge.

Raise a glass to Tommy at venue

Val Mundon and daughter Caroline Hickman with the portrait showing Tommy Mundon in action

FANS of Black Country comedian Tommy Mundon can raise a glass to the much-missed funnyman after the bar at Dudley Town Hall was re-named in his honour.

A painting of the comedian will take pride of place in the bar, which is now named the Tommy Mundon Lounge.

The family of the Halesowen entertainer said he would have been 'absolutely delighted' at the tribute.

The bar was officially re-named during a ceremony attended by Tommy's family and friends.

Plaque

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Waltho unveiled a painting of Tommy created by artist Keith Turley in 2009, which was one of the comedian's favourites.

It will hang in the lounge along with a plaque. Signs with the new name have been installed outside the bar entrances.

Tommy died in July 2014, at the age of 80, following a battle with Parkinson's Disease.

His widow Val and daughter Caroline attended the re-naming ceremony.

Val said: "Tommy was never a big drinker, although he did like a whisky. However, I know he would have been absolutely delighted with this"

NEWS IN BRIEF

Venue's screen is sell-out success

A SCREEN installed at Stourbridge Town Hall to show National Theatre productions is proving a success.

Hundreds have flocked to watch stars such as Benedict Cumberbatch and Tom Hiddleston via a live satellite link to National Theatre productions in London. Cumberbatch's acclaimed Hamlet production, currently running at the Barbican Theatre, was a top attraction with the broadcast at Stourbridge sold out. Tonight (Thu) the venue shows the NT production Of Mice And Men starring James Franco and Chris O'Dowd.

Public invited to health meeting

THE public are invited to the next meeting of Dudley's Clinical Commissioning Group to discuss changes to health and social care needs.

The public healthcare forum meeting takes place from 12.30pm until 2.30pm on December 3 at Brierley Hill Civic Hall in Bank Street. Dr Steve Mann, clinical executive and a local GP, said: "In January, we will be starting a listening exercise across Dudley and we want to make sure people understand the reasons for this."

To book a place call Keren Hodgson on (01384) 321730.

Toy collectors have two dates

A TOY and collectors fair will be held on two dates in Dudley, where comics, movie memorabilia and retro gaming are among items on offer.

The first date is on Sunday November 29 at The Station Hotel and the second at the Castle Hill venue will be on Sunday, January 24.

Prices are £1 for adults and free for children under 16. Early bird entrance is £5 from 9.30 to 10.30am, with general admission from 10.30am. Call 01902 276222.

Anniversary brew at festive ales celebration

A BREWERY which celebrated its 100th anniversary this year has brewed a special beer for the Dudley Winter Ales Fair later this month.

The festival logo, which will feature on commemorative beer glasses, also marks Woodsetton-based Holden's anniversary. The fair will be at Dudley Town Hall over the weekend of November 26 and 28. Among more than 70 beers will be Holden's Old Masters, a 10 per cent strength ale revived for the centenary celebrations.

Help for brain charity

A CHARITY that supports people who have suffered a brain injury has received a £3,000 grant.

Headway Black Country was given the donation by the Morrisons Foundation to help fund improvements works to its centre at Martin Hill Street, Dudley.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

DAVID Cameron's fearless, forthright and strident demands for a reformed EU. What do we want? Not a lot, really. When do we want it? No rush, honestly.

A NUMBER have emailed to say, halfway through November, you're already sick of Christmas adverts. That's because you are sweet, sentimental old things who cling to the belief that Christmas is a sacred event towards the end of December. It is actually a three-month festival, encompassing Diwali, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Black Friday and Putting the Clocks Back. It ends on December 25 and is followed by Boxing Day, when we all start wearing our poppies again, and New Year's Eve when we make ourselves sick with Easter eggs.

TRUST the historian, not the politicians. On the issue of migration, Sir Max Hastings stood head and shoulders above the rest of the panel on Radio 4's Any Questions. He described "a vast swathe of humanity from Africa and the Middle East who see what we have in our society and they do not have" and are making their way to Europe. He made the point that the biggest movement of people since the Second World War will continue for decades, affecting generations to come. He warned that, while it is wrong automatically to assume it will be a disaster, "Britain and Europe are going to become radically different places." He is surely right. Politicians talk about settling a few thousand here or there, as though they have real answers, but there are tens of millions who want a better life in Europe. We are a humane nation and there is no humane way of stopping them. We are seeing the beginning of the end of the old Europe and the Britain we knew. All we can hope is the folk dwelling here 100 years from now will live happily and look after the place.

A READER fresh back from a driver-awareness course tells me he learned two things. Firstly, the speed limit on dual carriageways is generally 70mph, not 60mph as he thought. Secondly, the gantry speed lights on motorways are only a recommendation, not mandatory. In short, he says, "the speed-awareness course actually made me aware of when I can go faster."

SO Farewell, Downton Abbey, with its sugary depiction of warm-hearted aristos and loyal, forelock- tugging staff. Everybody knew their place and all the servants got lots of time off for teaching, sitting exams or running a B&B. Maybe in some stately homes life was as jolly and easy as that. All I can contribute is that when I was born both my parents were in service at a grand house in Lancashire and if it was such a lovely experience, how come I was in my 40s before they told me about it?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Police hunt 'cruel and callous' burglar

A THIEF took medication and money from a terminally-ill pensioner as he slept in his Dudley home.

The 75-year-old, who has cancer, had only recently been discharged from hospital and was sleeping in the living room at his home when the burglar struck. He awoke to find the money and morphine-based medication had gone.

The pensioner's daughter, Susan Williams, said it was unbelievable that her father had been targeted. She said it would have been obvious to the burglar that her dad was seriously ill.

She added that he been re-admitted to hospital in the wake of the burglary.

"I can't believe anyone would do this to my dad. He is suffering from cancer and terminally-ill," she said. "I am appalled. How could anyone do this to a dying man?

"It would have been obvious that he was ill. For someone to see him sleeping and then search around him and steal his money and medication is just too upsetting."

The pensioner's family has made a heartfelt plea for the thief to do the right thing and come forward.

An investigation has been launched into the burglary with police searching through CCTV footage for clues.

Officers have also launched an appeal for information on the burglary on November 2 or 3. Detective Constable Ross Evans said the burglary was 'extremely cruel and callous'.

Call West Midlands Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 1115000.

Rules over taxi tints costing cabbies dear

By Richard Guttridge

TAXI drivers in Dudley say they are being forced to shell out hundreds of pounds to replace factory-fitted windows on their vehicles because they do not meet council safety regulations.

There is a rule that at least 40 per cent of light must be able to travel through back windows of Hackney carriages and private hire taxis in order to be granted a licence by Dudley Council.

But drivers say they are being unfairly treated as new vehicles are increasingly being made with tinted windows that do not meet those standards.

Council bosses have set the 40 per cent limit with safety in mind and as part of its efforts to ensure child sexual exploitation does not take place in the borough.

Dudley are among authorities that has begun training drivers about how to spot the signs of exploitation.

But drivers insist the rules are too harsh and that many of the windows in the taxis that would not reach the council's standard can actually be seen through.

Older

Some have already paid to have windows replaced to comply with the standards, while others have resorted to buying older vehicles that come within the limit.

Shaz Saleem, chairman of the Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association, said: "A growing number of vehicles are coming with a manufactured tint. If they are coming with it, it is within the law and Dudley Council needs to realise it is not above the law. This is affecting a lot of drivers across Dudley. I know one driver who had to spend nearly £1,000 because he had to import windows from Germany because Mercedes didn't do them here."

Councillor Richard Body, chairman of the taxi committee, said the situation would be reviewed.

Bags of fun with this shop display

John Sparry with some of his 300 plastic carrier bags collected over the past 15 years and on show in his shop

MORE than 300 plastic bags charting the rise and fall of supermarkets over the past 15 years feature on the wall for an avid collector in Dudley.

Musician, writer, broadcaster and historian John Sparry, from Wall Heath, has covered the walls of his second-hand book shop with them.

Mr Sparry, who has lived most of his life in the house which was bought by his grandparents for £106 in 1910, has a second-hand shop which occupies the front room.

Intrigued

He started collecting bags when customers left them with books. He said: "Some of the bags just intrigued me from the off. More often than not the bag was more interesting than the books! The different colours, shapes and sizes fascinated me, so I actually started collecting the bags. I began to search around myself and found some wonderful types of bags.

"Some of the brands I have on the bags are no longer in business, so there's a bit of originality to it.

"I did put the idea forward to one or two galleries as I thought it could make an effective display, but in the end I just decided to show the selection in my own shop, and customers have been more than entertained having a look at them all."

Starting in jazz as a drummer back in the 1950s, Mr Sparry is an accomplished vibraphone player and a popular raconteur.

Borough's figures for jobless in slight fall

THE number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and other out of work benefits fell across the Black Country last month, latest figures show.

Wolverhampton led the way with a drop of 202 on the claimant count to 6,009 in October. That figure is a seven-year low.

Unemployment in the West Midlands was down 10,000 to 157,000 between July and September compared to the previous three months and UK unemployment fell by 102,000 to 1.75 million, its lowest level in more than seven years, figures from the Office for National Statistics show.

Nationally there was a increase in those claiming benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance and the out of work element of Universal Credit, up by 3,300 in October to 795,500. The figures differ because not everyone classed as unemployed is eligible to claim benefits.

Meanwhile the number of people in work has continued to increase, to a record high of 31.2 million, 419,000 more than a year ago and up by 177,000 over the quarter.

Claimants in Sandwell were down 201 to 6,440 (3.2 per cent) and Walsall fell by 121 to 4,270 (2.5 per cent). But Dudley only had three fewer at 5,182 (2.7 per cent).

Cathy Taylor, JobCentre Plus employment and partnership manager in Wolverhampton, said the rising availability of temporary jobs in the lead up to Christmas had helped take more people off the claimant count register.

Expanding care firm take on 50

A CARE company based in Dudley has announced it is to take on 50 extra members of staff.

Home Instead, which offers care in homes across Stourbridge, Hagley and Halesowen, wants to expand its reach across the Black Country by taking on new carers to deal with demand for the company's services.

Company director Peter Bath said: "We have a growing need and we are looking to employ another 50 caregivers over the next year."

He added: "We have worked very hard since opening the business."

Anyone interested in joining the company or finding out more about the vacancies on offer should call 01562 885589 or visit homeinstead.co.uk website.

Historical society is hosting talk on BSA

THERE will be an illustrated talk on motorcycle manufacturer BSA by Keith Ferris at Stourbridge Historical Society's meeting. It will be held in the Wollaston Room at Stourbridge Town Hall tonight (Thu) at 7.30pm. Admission for non members is £3.

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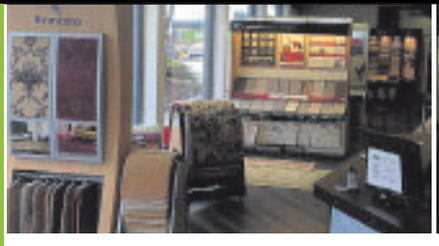

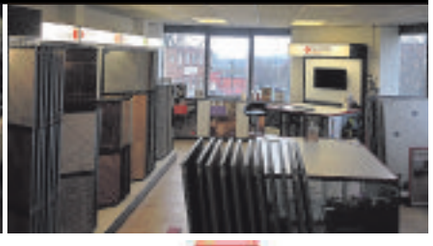

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Fees rise at Age Concern as fund cuts have impact

DAY care fees have risen at Age Concern centres in Halesowen and Stourbridge after funding was cut.

Age Concern lost around a third of its grant that helped fund transport for elderly people to and from the centres and activities while there.

Around £7,000 has been slashed from its grant totalling £21,000 – forcing charity officials to increase daily fees from £8.50 to £9.50.

Chairman Ken Turner admitted they were 'disappointed' but added: "We need to be more self sufficient. We need to look for funding outside existing avenues."

Age Concern runs Halesowen Day Centre in Green Lane, The Elton Centre in Stourbridge and at Mary Stevens Day Care Centre in Oldswinford.

The £9.50 fees are also spent on providing luncheon clubs. Age Concern officials say this is less than other similar organisations in the area.

The £7,000 was cut from its Office of Public Health money, which is co-ordinated by Dudley Council following the abolition of primary care trusts, but now the council faces major budget cuts.

Savage

Councillor Dave Branwood, responsible for adult social care services, said: "Council funding for Age Concern's day centre provision this year remains unchanged, but there has been a small reduction in monies for information and advice service.

"Details of funding arrangements for next year have not yet been agreed. What is clear is that Adult Social Care across the country is in the midst of a funding crisis. If George Osborne's Autumn spending review is as savage as we expect then, sadly, excellent organisations like Age Concern will inevitably face funding pressures. Dudley Council remains committed to protect services to the elderly wherever possible."

Education role for Labour MP

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin will play a key role in shaping Labour's education policies after being chosen as the new chairman of the party's Parliamentary Education Committee.

The committee will help form Labour's stance on education while in opposition, building up to the 2020 General Election campaign.

It will hold the Government to account on issues such as early years support for families, school standards, apprenticeships and training.

Mr Austin was elected by fellow Labour MPs. He is already a member of the House of Commons Education Select Committee.

He said: "I'll be using my place on the committee to push for sharp improvements in school results in places like Dudley."

Name errors led to wrong body blunder

Philip Bradbourn MEP: second funeral

A SPELLING mistake was among a string of errors that led to the wrong body being cremated of West Midlands MEP Philip Bradbourn at Bushbury Crematorium, a report reveals.

The 63-year-old from Tipton died on December 20 last year at Good Hope Hospital in Sutton Coldfield following a battle with cancer. His funeral took place at in January. However, the man who was cremated was Philip Bradburn, who had died at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital on December 24.

Staff at Good Hope's mortuary repeatedly failed to carry out accurate identity checks on the two bodies, the Heart of England NHS Trust said in the report, with written records either incomplete or inaccurate, leading to confusion.

Bosses at the trust have apologised for the mistake, which they have attributed to a 'complex and multifactorial' set of circumstances.

The report revealed a series of failings on the part of two funeral directors and Good Hope. It says that as Good Hope's mortuary was nearing capacity, staff requested four bodies – including Mr Bradbourn's – to be moved to Central England Co-operative Funeralcare in Lichfield.

Phone

The names of those to be moved were given over the phone but not followed up with an email listing details, the report said.

The funeral home collected Mr Bradbourn's body but sent it back to Good Hope four days later after his family requested a cremation. On the same day, Mr Bradburn's body – which had been wrongly identified as Mr Bradbourn's – was also sent back to the hospital.

The name 'Bradbourn' had been scrawled onto the accompanying paperwork, over-writing Mr Bradburn's name. Two doctors signed off the cremation for Mr Bradbourn but the body of Mr Bradburn was released.

Dr Andrew Catto, of Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We are very sorry that this incredibly distressing situation has happened."

A spokesman for Central England Co-operative said: "Our priority has been to work closely with all concerned so that we can learn from this unfortunate incident and build further appropriate safeguards for the future."

A second funeral for Mr Bradbourn took place at Wolverhampton's St Peter's Collegiate Church in February.

£35,000 roundabout sculpture is step closer

A PROJECT creating a £35,000 sculpture on a Halesowen roundabout is gathering pace as a fundraising scheme gets under way.

Metal artist Luke Perry is creating the anvil and hammer sculpture after being commissioned by the town's chamber of trade.

People have urged officials to brighten up Grange Road Island at the junction with A456 Manor Way which is currently bare.

It is hoped the sculpture will create an improved image for motorists on their way into the town.

Plans were revealed two months ago by Halesowen Chamber of Trade. Now the fundraising bid will get under way after a meeting on Friday.

The sculpture will cost around £28,000 and landscaping is estimated to cost a further £7,000.

Halesowen Chamber of Trader chairman Wayne Edwards said: "We will have more of an update on Friday but plans are all in place to push forward and hopefully get started very soon.

Asset

"The sculpture would be a real asset to the community.

"From Friday's meeting we aim to know more about the specifics in terms of timescale, which we believe will be around six months and how much money is needed.

"It's something the people of Halesowen should definitely be looking forward to and we hope people will continue to get behind us in raising money."

Mr Edwards said he believed the funding would be found and he was preparing to hold further talks with Dudley councillors and borough officials about the project.

Mr Perry will create the sculpture in his family-run factory in Cradley Heath.

It is designed on the idea of a hammer and anvil representing the metal working trades that dominated Halesowen's heritage.

He said: "As a symbol it is not only representative but accurate, swords were forged from the medieval period in the town using these tools, nail-making, other cottage industry trades and larger industrial metalworking processes would use these simple tools. In addition to this, it is also part of the Halesowen borough coat of arms.

"I personally feel that it is a very strong design – one which will work on the site for numerous reasons practically, visually with site lines from the various access points and also in a way which captures the spirit of the area locally and as a larger community in the industrial midlands."

"I see this piece being something which I and the local people will become very proud of."

An impression of how the sculpture celebrating metal working in Halesowen would look

NEWS IN BRIEF

The Portal is proving popular

HUNDREDS have visited Dudley Canal Trust to see its new multi-million pound visitor centre after last month's opening.

The popular tourist attraction now boasts a two-storey building, known as The Portal, which includes an interactive exhibition, reception, office space, educational area, restaurant and gift shop.

Hundreds of schoolchildren have already attended workshops at the up-to-date canal education and industrial heritage centre, at the site off Birmingham New Road.

Singing spaceman to land at venue

CANADIAN astronaut Chris Hadfield, whose performance of David Bowie's Space Oddity on the International Space Station became an internet sensation, is coming to Birmingham.

An Evening with Chris Hadfield takes place in Symphony Hall on January 19 at 7.30pm.

He will be giving an illustrated talk about his experiences during five months in space aboard the ISS and performing songs including Space Oddity. Tickets start at £28 plus fee. See www.thsh.co.uk

Fireworks boost for cancer charity

A FIREWORKS display, bonfire and auction has raised more than £6,000 for charity.

Top Banana, based in Stourbridge, hosted the fundraising evening in aid Cancer Research UK. The events management company collected £6,300 after laying on events at its headquarters last Friday. The company has raised more than £17,000 for the charity. Managing director Nick Terry said: "We're really grateful for everyone's support."

Carol singers needed for community event

DUDLEY Council for Voluntary Service is looking for musicians and singers to take part in a community carol singing event in Brierley Hill.

The singing in the town centre will follow the organisation's Christmas fair in Brierley Hill Civic Hall from 4.30pm on Saturday, December 5.

Anyone who wishes to take part can visit the Dudley CVS office in Albion St, Brierley Hill, or for more details about the event or the organisation call (01384) 573381.

New 20mph limit

A 20mph speed limit will be brought in near a primary school in Dudley as part of a £17,000 safety scheme.

Council bosses have confirmed the new limit will be imposed in Peel Street, Owen Street and Kates Hill, next to Kates Hill Primary School. There were no objections submitted .

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

The mind boggles over return of Porridge

NEARLY 40 years since the original series ended, the BBC is set to bring back classic sitcom Porridge.

But it won't be reviving the austere surroundings of HM Prison Slade, which was reputedly named after the Black Country glam rock band.

Writers Dick Clement and Ian Le Frenais say the new series will be right up to date, and set in a modern prison.

The mind boggles.

This presumably means Godber will be whiling his time away on a PlayStation, while Fletch is suing the governor under the Human Rights Act because his pillow was not plump enough.

McLaren will be serving up gourmet fittle in the canteen, and Grouty will be getting jiggy with the Amazonian female warder who smuggles his drug supplies in. And Fletch will probably rue the day he moaned about the judge when he finds his new cellmate is Rolf Harris.

■■■

NOT that the younger generation will be watching any of this, of course. Apparently, teenagers don't watch television any more, they get their entertainment on YouTube.

Actually, you can get proper TV programmes on YouTube. You can watch an entire episode of The Likely Lads or Mind Your Language if you have got the patience to watch all the different clips in the correct order.

But it seems teenagers prefer to spend their time watching other teenagers, unlikely stars who record weekly broadcasts from their own bedrooms, which are then transmitted to millions of registered followers.

For instance, there was a teenager called Rebecca Black whose wealthy parents paid for her to have her own pop video. The final work, an infuriatingly catchy ditty about her journey to school, was so excruciatingly bad that it catapulted her to worldwide stardom, and a reported 1.2 million youngsters now subscribe to her videos.

Another is Kimberly "Sweet Brown" Wilkins who became a minor celebrity in the US after ranting on a TV news bulletin about how a house fire had affected her bronchitis. Youths spend hours glued to their tablets, waiting for her to shout "Ain't nobody got time for that?"

Then there is Alfie Deyes, who reportedly has 4.1 million subscribers to his Pointless Blog which, to be fair, does exactly what it says on the tin. His young fans hang on his every word while he covers subjects such as why he loves his cactus, and how the speakers on his hi-fi system are 'sick'.

The sad thing is, mindless though this drivel is, you can't really blame the youngsters for watching it. Because even Alfie's plants are more interesting than X Factor.

The grave of Sergeant Major Walter Chiverton at St John's

The ornate grave of Sergeant Major Thomas Harrison

The grave of 19-year-old Leonard Dorsett

Military graves are discovered at church

Saving a Dudley church has uncovered stories of bravery, loyalty and tragedy, report by **RICHARD GUTTRIDGE**

HIDDEN away in an overgrown graveyard in the shadow of a decaying church being readied for demolition – it was no resting place for a band of war heroes.

But amid the brambles and weeds in the grounds of the Dudley church lay a military graveyard, which somehow over the years had been forgotten.

Dozens of men who went off to fight for their country during the First and Second World Wars, and other conflicts, were buried there.

It was to the amazement of those trying to resurrect the abandoned St John's Church in Kates Hill that at least 39 military heroes were resting peacefully in their churchyard.

Many of their stories had never been told – including the longest-serving member of the British Army and a soldier who saved the life of a member of the Royal Family.

On the face of it, the story of St John's Church is a depressing one. It has now been closed for more than for over a decade.

The building was in a steady state of decline and when it was earmarked for demolition it appeared the stories of the soldiers could be lost forever. But all that changed when a handful of campaigners came to the rescue.

Preservation

Deb Brownlee, who founded the St John's Preservation Group, said: "I was running a charity shop 100 yards away and people used to talk about why the church was going to be pulled down. I didn't set out to start a preservation group to try and save the church but when it eventually became pretty obvious it was going to come down, I was asked to do something about it."

At that stage, not even they knew about the military cemetery but that would soon change.

The group was contacted by a historian, keen to find out more about a former vicar who served at St John's during the 19th century. He had a particular interest in the church and had previously written a book chronicling the men whose graves were in the churchyard.

Deb Brownlee, of St John's Church Preservation Group next to the grave of William Cheese

Ms Brownlee said: "We knew nothing at all, not the slightest thing. It was just awe inspiring. The stories just keep coming through. I just think thank God we are doing this — it would have all been lost. Sometimes, there is a grave that you wouldn't give a second look but has an amazing story. It makes you look at the graveyard through different eyes.

"Most people were astonished. The churchyard is quite far back from the road and you wouldn't know there was two-and-a-half acres."

The group were originally charged with saving the church but were determined to give the brave men the resting place they deserve.

The current count of military dead is 39, many were killed in action. All of the men are thought to be from the local area.

Some are easy to distinguish, with brief details of a rank and where they were killed accompanying the name and dates of birth and death. Others feature just a name.

Many had become worn and weathered over the years, and inscriptions are difficult to decipher. Many of the graves were simply forgotten about.

The book was hugely helpful, providing detail and background about many of the fallen, but more research was needed to complete the group. They scoured records and archives and put out public appeals for relatives to come forward.

Ms Brownlee said: "Many who were killed didn't have any children. So we have to try and find nieces and great nieces. It often has to be the children of the siblings who are wanting to remember them."

One such attempt to reach out saw the niece of one soldier come forward who played an important role in shaping British history.

George Thomason is credited with saving the life of a man who would go on to be part of the Royal Family. It is thought that during the First World War he sprung to the aid of Viscount Henry Lascelles, who would go on to marry Princess Mary, the only daughter of George V, was walking along the top of a trench when the enemy began opening fire. Quick-thinking Thomason, whose duties included protecting the revered Viscount, dashed up to pull him down, in all likelihood saving his life. Viscount Lascelles did take a bullet to the backside but was spared major damage.

Thomason, who served with the Grenadier Guards, was awarded the Military Medal for an unrelated act of bravery. Unlike many of his comrades with whom he shares the graveyard, he survived the war and lived to the age of 68, passing away in 1963.

Sergeant Major Walter Chiverton is believed to be the longest-serving member of the British Army in history. He died as the Second World War was coming to an end in 1945 but not on the battlefield, making it to the grand old age of 92.

In January 1905, on his 50th birthday, Walter was placed on reserve. He was re-instated as recruiting officer in 1914 following the outbreak of war. Afterwards he was transferred to Wolverhampton, once again as recruiting officer, and continued as a volunteer recruiting officer until 1944, meaning he served the army for a total of 77 years.

It was discovered that he lived a stone's throw from the churchyard in Caroline Street, which runs parallel with the graveyard. His grave sits just over the wall from his old home.

In contrast, Leonard Dorsett was just 19 when he was killed during the Great War on October 24, 1918 – his death cruelly coming just a fortnight before the end of the conflict.

Ms Brownlee added said: "In 200 years time, I still want the church to be able to say these are the graves, this happened. We must never forget."

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I know Mario Lanza man's secret — after meeting him at the library

I was interested reading in The Chronicle that the mysterious 'Mario Lanza man' is still around. I know him. We shared the lift in Stourbridge Library at our first meeting. He told me he'd attended Hill Street School (as I had done) but didn't like it because the boys were caned!

He is a couple of years older than me (I am 82). I told him I'd never give him away because it would spoil the mystery. He told me he would take his secret 'to the grave'. Over the years I have obtained 14 of his Mario Lanza cards, which are mainly beer mats with his writing on the back.

My favourite one states that Mario Lanza knew the 'F' word in 20 different languages!

Our most bizarre meeting took place in a reading room in Stourbridge Library. The 'Mario Lanza man' decided to show me the exercise he does, every night before he goes to bed. It consisted of standing upright with your head back as far as it would go, while counting up to 60 seconds. He said it always felt lovely afterwards.

We were both doing it there and then, and we must have looked very peculiar, as if we were examining some fault on the library ceiling.

The 'Mario Lanza man' was also the same person who painted 'Black Catt' on various buildings around Stourbridge. They were life-sized and done well but the council cleaned them off, I was told, which I thought was a shame.

Anyway, long may the 'Mario Lanza man' reign!

J EDEN
Stourbridge

Here's more health tips

WE were told butter was bad for us, margarine was healthy. Lard bad for us, vegetable oil good. Drinking wine was good in moderation, now not too sure.

Take a walk in the fresh air as long as it is out of the way of diesel cars and lorries, but we were told diesel vehicles were much cleaner than petrol.

Everything has been turned on its head, what was good for us is now bad, well you know the rest. I have found the answer that will allow us to live forever — stop drinking, stop eating, stop breathing. Eureka, it has to be right.

N D CADDICK
Coseley

Museum and gallery accessible

COUNCILLOR Sparks has stated that he supports the closure of Dudley Museum and Art Gallery because it is 'unsuitable for people with wheelchairs'. Does the councillor genuinely believe this? If he is genuine, you would think he would check the facts.

The simple truth is the museum is very well adapted for wheelchair access. The main entrance has very noticeable ramp access and there is an electric wheelchair lift to access the lower ground floor, as well as further ramps making all exhibits on that level accessible. There is a lift to provide access to further exhibits and display rooms on the upper floor.

He no longer has a good reason to support closure. So Councillor Sparks, do the decent thing.

A A CROMPTON
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
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EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Flabbergasted by demand on clubs

I WAS flabbergasted after reading that Dudley Council were thinking of increasing bowling green club fees from £780 to £12,000 pounds.

What planet are the people who are running Dudley council on to think of increasing fees to such staggering amount? I wonder if such a proposed amount is legal?

I would assume that most members who play bowls are retired people and this gives them pleasure in their retirement.

I don't know what membership totals are for these clubs but I am sure that they would not be able to afford increases on this scale.

Apparently officers are going around to clubs asking them to mow the greens themselves and telling them how subsidised they are.

Who pays for the mowing of all of the other greens ie parks, roadside verges, etc, etc, etc — the council taxpayers of course, so aren't the bowling green members council taxpayers? May 2016 comes to mind.

B WHITEHOUSE
Kingswinford

A trek for the children's tea

IT'S about time we had our McDonald's. The land has been passed by the council and still it's not built.

I have to catch two buses to get to Merry Hill with a pushchair and three children and twin babies to get the kids their tea when they come from school.

It's not on, we want our McDonald's open in Stourbridge.

C DAWNING
Stourbridge

No culture

DO Dudley Council think that the people of Dudley are unworthy of culture? Our medieval market town is fast losing its identity. We have no theatre and are to lose our art gallery and museum.

A DOWNING
Dudley

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'Obsessive' ex waged campaign of harrasment on two women

AN 'obsessive' 21-year-old from Cradley who waged relentless campaigns of harassment against two former girlfriends has been jailed for 21 months.

Brad Cox repeatedly ignored restraining orders banning him from having contact with either woman, both of whom had a child by him.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that he even recruited a 'mob' armed with a baseball bat to intimidate one of the victim, said Mr Peter Cooke, prosecuting. The group led by Cox arrived at her home while she was out and hurled a brick through the baby's bedroom window before fleeing after being spotted by a neighbour.

The woman received six phone calls in quick succession after the terrifying incident, but only answered one. It was from Cox who warned: "This is just the start. I ain't finished yet."

She had changed her status on Facebook to say she was in a relationship, just 22 minutes later, she had an abusive phone call from Cox who declared that she would regret her new relationship. He bombarded her with 80 further calls in 24 hours.

The previous month, he had contacted the other woman, who had an 18-month-old child by him, after she blocked him from her Facebook account, the court heard.

Cox, of Chapel House Lane, Colley Gate, then started to write to her and continued to do so until four days before he was due in court to face charges of breaking the court order.

Mr Cooke said: "The content was obsessive and unrelenting. "

Mr Simon Hamblett, defending, said: "He has been held in custody since his arrest on April 19. He has learned his lesson and knows the more he interferes in the lives of these two women, the longer he will spend in prison."

Cox admitted repeatedly breaking terms of the restraining orders.

MP calling for lower prices at the pumps

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has called on Chancellor George Osborne to cut petrol prices as part of his Autumn Statement.

Mr Austin is backing campaign group FairFuelUK, which is calling for a 3p cut in fuel duty to help families.

The Labour MP said he had written to the Chancellor on the issue saying that motorists were currently being made to pay too much.

He said: "Like most people in Dudley I have noticed the steep increase in cost when filling up my car. Going to the pump has become very expensive for millions of families across the country. The Government should help hard working families and boost the economy at the same time by cutting fuel duty in the Autumn Statement."

Last year Mr Austin was thanked by TV motoring expert Quentin Wilson, of FairFuelUK, for his support in pressing the Government to freeze fuel duty.

Amira helps rickshaw raise £3.7m

Amira Davidson with Matt Baker during The One Show's Rickshaw Challenge which has raised a record amount

A TEENAGER from Kingswinford helped secure a record-breaking total for The One Show's Rickshaw Challenge for BBC Children in Need.

£3,745,411 has now been raised from this year's fundraiser, bringing the total raised by the challenge to over £11.6 million over the last five years with donations for this year's challenge still coming in.

Seventeen-year-old Amira Davidson was one of six young riders to undertake the 477-mile journey from Land's End to the East End of London along with The One Show's Matt Baker. She got involved with the challenge following her experience with The Children's Trust, a project funded by BBC Children in Need.

In 2013 Amira's sister, Elle, a student at Wolverhampton Girls' High School, suffered a brain haemorrhage. She spent months in hospital and now requires round-the-clock care.

The family struggled to find a place that could address her complex needs and wanted to play an active role in her rehabilitation. It was Amira who discovered The Children's Trust online. The charity offers specialist care for children and teens suffering from brain injury.

With help from the charity, Amira has been able to come to terms with her sister's condition and has learned ways to help care for her.

Amira said: "I'm unbelievably happy with the results of our challenge. I don't think any of us could ever have imagined a total so high, and I just want to say a huge thank you to everyone who got behind us."

Big fines for pet owners over dog mess

THREE people have been prosecuted at court for not cleaning up after their pets under Sandwell Council's crackdown on dog mess.

Wardens have now issued nearly 140 dog dirt fines since the council launched a hard-hitting poster campaign last year.

Gillian Jones, 31, of Parkes Street, Smethwick, faces a £592 bill after failing to clean up after her dog at Harry Mitchell Park on August 1.

She did not attend a hearing before Sandwell Magistrates, who ordered her to pay a £220 fine, £200 costs, a £150 criminal court charge and £22 victim surcharge.

Alan Westwood, 67, of Bell End, Rowley Regis, was hit with the same £592 bill after failing to clean up after his dog at Britannia Park on August 5.

Westwood also failed to attend the hearing. Magistrates ordered him to pay a £220 fine, £200 costs, a £150 criminal court charge and £22 victim surcharge.

Paul Lyn-Kew, 48, of Ruskin Avenue, Rowley Regis, attended court and admitted not cleaning up after his dog at Britannia Park on April 26.

Magistrates imposed a conditional discharge for 12 months and ordered him to pay £200 costs and a £150 criminal court charge and a £15 victim surcharge.

Medieval banquets to be held at castle site

DUDLEY Zoo is serving up a feast fit for a king this Christmas with an added extra of a reindeer encounter.

The Oak Kitchen at the Queen Mary Restaurant at the Castle Hill attraction is hosting four medieval banquets on December 10, 11, 17 and 18 at 7pm.

The meal is £34.95 per head and to book or for more information email amy.pennicooke@amadeusfood.co.uk or call (01384) 215 319.

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Folk-blues singer to launch new album

Singer-songwriter Sunjay Brayne will be officially launching new album Black and Blues at a folk club in Stourbridge

A FOLK and blues singer will launch his new album on home turf with a gig in Stourbridge tomorrow night (Fri).

Sunjay Brayne, from Brierley Hill, is preparing to launch his new LP Black and Blues at the end of this month.

To celebrate he will be returning to play at popular pub venue Katie Fitzgerald's, in Enville Road, Wollaston, on November 20.

The performer, who was nominated to The BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Awards in 2012, has been on tour this summer.

He was a music student at Kidderminster College and has headlined festivals across the country including the Wessex Folk Festival.

But he is returning to familiar ground at the venue which plays host to Stourbridge Folk Club.

Doors open at 8pm. Tickets cost £8.80 including booking fee.

Visit the website www.ents24.com/stourbridge-events/katie-fitzgeralds/sunjay/4408405 or call (01384) 374410 to book.

Combined authority deal now signed off

CHANCELLOR George Osborne signed off on a devolution deal on Tuesday that will see a West Midlands Combined Authority set up, bringing an elected mayor and £1 billion of Government investment to the region.

Mr Osborne joined members of the West Midlands Combined Authority shadow board to put pen to paper on what he called 'an historic deal'.

It will see the region become the first outside of the north of England to sign up to a devolution deal with an elected Mayor.

Mr Osborne said: "We want to make the Midlands Britain's engine for growth and this deal will give the region the powerful levers it needs to make that happen.

Achieve

"We have worked with local council leaders across the party divide, and today we are announcing a collaborative way of working that would not have been countenanced in this region even just a few years ago."

Final proposals on how the combined authority will work and what it aims to achieve will go before Parliament in April 2016.

Solihull's Councillor Bob

By Peter Madeley

Sleigh, chairman of the shadow board of the West Midlands Combined Authority, described the move as a 'historic moment'.

"We are committed to building on our strengths, including our exports and our inward investment, and to working towards increasing the £80 billion that the region currently contributes to the UK economy."

Stewart Towe, chairman of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership said: "The level of partnership between public and private sector, which is unique to the West Midlands proposed devolution deal, is focused on investing in the region, creating new jobs, improving skills, delivering more homes and dramatically improving transport."

Concern over jobs as four tax offices to close in shake-up

FOUR tax offices in the Black Country are to shut as part of plans revealed by HM Revenue & Customs to cut £100 million from its budget.

Jobs could be lost as HMRC looks to close 137 local offices across the country by 2027.

Staff in the region will initially transfer to the remaining 17 offices before a new regional centre opens in Birmingham in 2019/20. But unions fear the plan could lead to thousands of HMRC's 56,000 staff being made redundant and have called for a parliamentary review into the closures.

Bosses at HMRC were unable to confirm how many jobs would go as part of what they call a 'modernisation programme'.

Four Black Country offices will close including Bridge House in Brierley Hill, which will close in 2016/17, with staff moving into City Centre House, Birmingham, before moving to the new regional centre in 2019-20.

Transitional

The Merry Hill office will transfer to the Department for Work and Pensions. Pattison House in Walsall will close next year with staff moving to City Centre House in Birmingham as a transitional site.

Crown House in Wolverhampton will close in 2019/20, with staff moving into the new regional centre. HMRC says it expects between 3,100 and 3,400 full-time staff to work in the new Birmingham regional centre.

In the last five years more than 10,000 jobs have been cut from the department and 250 offices have closed, along with 281 walk-in tax enquiry centres.

Lin Homer, HMRC's chief executive, said: "The new regional centre in Birmingham will bring our staff together in a more modern and cost-effective building in an area with lower rent."

Accident is verdict on driver's death

A LORRY driver from Dudley died after his vehicle collided with another HGV along a section of the M6 motorway, an inquest was told.

Father-of-five Lee Smith, better known as Andy, aged 46, of Wrens Nest was travelling between junctions 4 and 4a, in the Chelmsley Wood area, when the accident took place.

It happened on July 7 when Mr Smith was driving a Mercedes drop sided lorry.

Coroner for Birmingham and Solihull Emma Brown gave a conclusion of accidental death at an inquest last week. The hearing was told Mr Smith's vehicle had collided with the rear of another HGV.

Mr Smith was the youngest of eight siblings. He also had three daughters, two sons and five grandaughters.

After the crash, his fiancée Jean said: "Andy was a loving fiancé, father, granddad, brother and uncle to many. Everyone is in total shock to lose him in this way."

Rubbish mountain still standing tall

Million pound mound — the rubbish is still piled high at Refuse Derived Fuel on Moor Street, Brierley Hill

CALLS have been made for the Environment Agency to pay for the removal of a mountain of rubbish which is causing an ongoing nightmare for nearby residents.

Planning permission has been granted for 94 flats on the former Refuse Derived Fuel site in Moor Street, Brierley Hill, where the rubbish sits, but the scheme has now been thrown into doubt over who picks up the bill to remove the trash.

It has emerged that owners of the site have not been able to attract a developer due to the costs involved with clearing the waste. Neighbours who thought their six-year nightmare living in the shadow of the 19ft-high heap was over.

It is believed any developer getting on board would have to pay at least £1 million to clear the pile of bricks, wood and plastic.

Brierley Hill councillor Rachel Harris said she cannot see any developer being willing to agree to do that and says it should be the responsibility of the Environment Agency to clear up.

The agency had been trying to seize assets from former Refuse Derived Fuel director Robert McNaughton, who was given a six-month jail term for failing to clear the site. But the company has gone into liquidation.

Environment Agency spokeswoman Harriet Templar-Vasey said: "In most cases the Environment Agency will not use public funds to pay for the clear-up of the waste unless there is serious risk to people or the environment. We are continuing to explore every possible avenue to get it cleared."

Slasher to be celebrated in library talk

THE colourful life of William Perry will be unveiled as part a series of library talks.

Perry, known as the Tipton Slasher, was the bare-knuckle boxing champion of England twice during the middle of the 1800s.

His fighting career spanned 35 years but the talk will examine his life outside the ring, which included spells as a pub landlord. His statue stands in the centre of Tipton.

The Life and Loves of the Tipton Slasher by Chris Smith will be held in Dudley library on Tuesday, from 2.30pm to 3.30pm.

A detailed look at the Stourbridge glass industry will take place on Friday, November 27.

Whiskers on Kittens will be held in Stourbridge library from 2.30pm to 3.30pm.

Diverse

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "The Black Country has a wonderful history and these talks bring to life the local characters and places of a bygone age that have helped shape the diverse heritage and culture of the borough."

Admission for each talk costs £3.

For further information call Dudley library on (01384) 815560 or Stourbridge library on (01384) 812945.

Crafts and drama at glass centre's fair

THE Ruskin Glass Centre in Stourbridge is hosting a Christmas craft fair next weekend.

The event is running on November 28 and 29 from 10am to 4pm each day.

The centre in Wollaston Road is also presenting performances by Eurythmy West Midlands .

Fourth year students will be performing Lady and the Lion in the Furnace Theatre on Saturday, November 28 at 12 noon and 2pm.

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Let it flow — fountain restored

MORE than 60 years after water last ran through Dudley town centre's famous fountain, it is flowing once again.

The landmark fountain in Dudley market place has undergone a major renovation to allow the water to run again after decades of being dry.

The impressive monument has been a fixture of the High Street for 150 years and council bosses were keen to ensure it could once again be seen in all its glory.

Deputy Mayor Councillor Mohammed Hanif launched the new-look fountain, saying: "The restoration of this structure is a symbol of the investment that has been made in Dudley."

Keeper of the fountain Iris Reed and Michael Forsyth, the great nephew of its designer James Forsyth, were among guests at the ceremony.

The project has included renovation of the water basins, new pipe work, restoration of statues and a replacement for the missing tiered fountain in the central archway. Historic photographs and written references were used to help restore the missing elements.

Bespoke pieces of coloured curved glass were made by Paul Floyd, of Architectural and Interior Glasswork, at the Ruskin Glass Centre in Stourbridge.

Visitors stop to admire the restored Victorian fountain in the centre of Dudley, which is flowing again after decades being dry

Historic canal stretch barging back into life

A HALF-MILE stretch of Black Country canal that has stood derelict since the 1960s will be brought back into use.

Plans are being drawn up to restore the section of the Bradley Arm in Bilston and link it up with the Walsall Canal.

The annual meeting of the Canal and River Trust West Midlands Partnership was told the Bradley Arm had been the subject of a newly completed study.

The Bradley Arm, which was built in the 18th and 19th centuries, now runs only as far as the trust's main maintenance depot at Bradley Lane, which still makes wooden lock gates.

This also houses the pump originally installed for mine drainage, which is now the main source of water to the Birmingham Canal.

Steve Burt, who heads community engagement and volunteering for the partnership, said: "The Bradley Arm and the lock gate workshop are a very important part of the network. Old masonry is just below the surface and this will now be exposed."

Meeting of council and clubs over greens row

A ROW has broken out over bowling green maintenance fees in Dudley after claims that the price hike would go against covenants dating back almost 90 years.

Dudley Council's Greencare team held a crisis meeting last week with bowling club members over the controversial plans.

The council, which needs to save £20 million by 2018, pays around £12,000 a year to maintain the greens at each of the borough's eight bowling clubs. Clubs themselves pay only £750 towards those costs.

Councillor Heather Rogers

Council bosses say they can no longer afford to subsidise these costs, leaving clubs facing a massive bill.

Club members using Mary Stevens Park, in Stourbridge, and Stevens Park, in Wollescote, held the meeting with council officials about the proposed changes.

Both parks were gifted to the public by philanthropist and businessman Ernest Stevens, to be managed by the council as a trustee.

Campaigners argue under the deed of gifts for both parks, dated 1929 and 1931, Dudley Council is obligated to maintain the greens.

Condition

Phil Bate, chairman of Stourbridge Croquet Club, said: "We all feel very strongly that the council should look at the deed of gift before making these demands.

"The greens are not in the best of condition and we have not got the money."

Councillor Heather Rogers, chairman of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park, added: "Dudley Council as a trustee is responsible for maintaining the assets and so far we have not heard anything about the Ernest Stevens deed of gift.

"We have no responsibility of maintenance and are not the sole users of these greens.

"If the bowling greens are not maintained then interest will wain and we will be left with how the park was in 2000 with vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

"These greens bring fresh air and mental stimulation for older people, and so far we have been told we should pay up or lose them, and I think the council have been very heavy handed."

Russ Newey and Liz Stuffins, from Dudley Council, told the meeting that everyone would need to get 'creative' in deciding how greens were maintained.

Mr Newey, Greencare group manager, said: "Proposals will not be in until the 2017/18 financial year. We are coming out to talk to all the people who use such services now so we can start consulting on how to move forward."

Three options were put forward to users – consisting of the increase in maintenance fees, transfer of the management to the clubs themselves or a reduction in maintenance altogether.

King and I on the way

A THEATRE company is to perform a classic Rodgers and Hammerstein musical in Sedgley in the new year.

Wolverhampton-based amateurs Phoenix Theatre Company will stage The King and I at the Mill Theatre, Dormston School, February 23 to 27 with nightly 7.30pm performancesand a 2.30pm matinee on the Saturday.

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Cradley Heathens saved in Monmore track deal

CRADLEY Heathens speedway club has been saved for another season with a return to Wolverhampton being agreed.

Fans suffered weeks of uncertainty after club bosses announced they intended to bow out.

Last season the Heathens were based at Birmingham's Perry Barr track but the club had yet to confirm its home for 2016. The deal announced last week will see the club race at Monmore Green Stadium, where it spent four seasons between 2011 and 2014.

Nigel Pearson

Chairman Nigel Pearson said all thoughts of selling the club were ditched when the possibility of a switch to the city emerged.

He said: "I would like to thank everyone at the club who has helped make this a reality. We had messages from supporters who said if Cradley did not run they simply would not watch speedway. So this has to be good news not only for the club but for speedway in the West Midlands and the whole country."

The Cradley Heathens have been struggling to find a permanent home after losing their track in Dudley Wood two decades ago.

Mr Pearson and club partners Chris Van Straaten and Gary Patchett revived the club in 2010 after 15 years out of league speedway. Under the new arrangement the Heathens will race on alternate weeks to the Wolves, who compete in a different league.

Speedway action from Cradley Heathens last 'home' meeting of the season

The team will be managed by Mr Patchett and manager Will Pottinger with coach Graham Jones staying on for 2016.

Mr Pearson said the deal would operate on a 'year by year' basis and the search for a permanent home would go on.

He added: "As long as the supporters keep backing Cradley it enables us running the club to continue to talk with Dudley Council to explore potential new sites, but that is not proving easy. We have thousands of fans we do not want to let down and that is why we have gone the extra mile to keep the club going next year.

"Of course the dream remains to have our own stadium. I would appeal again to anybody or any organisations which know of or have land available to contact the club."

The club has also announced Dr Rod Brooks, a former track doctor at Wolverhampton, joins the Heathens as a partner. Mr Pearson said Dr Brooks was joining on a 'financial' basis having made a contribution.

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Museum stays in pipeline as part of attraction's plans

ALLOWING overnight stays and building an area focusing on the modern day are just some of the ideas laid out in an ambitious vision for the Black Country Living Museum.

A five-year plan sets out the museum's goal of attracting 500,000 visitors a year – its current figures are around 290,000.

Andrew Lovett, director and chief executive, confirmed museum bosses are mulling over plans to let people spend their holidays on the site.

The masterplan also sets out ideas to redevelop the southern half of the site – which visitors first come across when they walk through the entrance – to provide a fully joined up journey.

By focusing on modern day manufacturing in the Black Country in this section, the museum would offer a counterpoint to the history experience in the popular Canal Street area.

Legacy

"What we're thinking is we want to explain the legacy of the story that we tell in the historic area," Mr Lovett said.

"In the non-historic area we want to have some sort of focus on modern manufacturing – that could be exhibitions, displays or events about what's happening in the Black Country today.

"History doesn't stop – it's a continuum and we want to put things into context .

"We think we could get up to 500,000 visitors a year.

"At the back of our minds is about fulfilling the potential that exists within the museum.

"We've got the story to tell and the right size of site so we're looking to develop from around 290,000 this year – so targeting 500,000 doesn't seem at all unreasonable."

Mr Lowell said they were discussing allowing people to stay in the museum overnight, adding this was an example of the site's immersive nature.

Restoration of chapels on display

PEOPLE will be offered a behind-the-scenes look at the restoration of historic Black Country chapels later this month.

A long-awaited £1 million project to revamp Lye and Wollescote Chapels is nearing completion.

Acting chairman of the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust John Woodall will be welcoming people to look at the renovations on Saturday, November 28.

He said: "This project has been made possible by fantastic community support. As the work on site is nearing completion, this is an opportunity to welcome local people to drop in. They can view the revival of this important historic building that has been carried out using traditional heritage construction skills."

The chapels will be open from 10.30am until 1pm. Photographic displays will show 'before and after' results of the project. For further details call 07805 489 296.

Lucky escape for baby as car overturns

The family car ended up on its roof in an early-morning crash in Dudley Picture: Dudley Fire Station

A six-month-old baby had a lucky escape when the car she was travelling in overturned in a crash in the Black Country.

The little girl escaped serious injury because she was in a child seat when the smash happened in Salop Street, Dudley, shortly before 5am on Sunday.

The Peugeot 206 was in collision with a taxi that was carrying two female passengers on their way home after a night out and ended up up on its roof.

Firefighter Stephen Hunter from Dudley fire station who attended the scene with colleagues from Brierley Hill explained: "The baby and her father were out of the car and being attended to by paramedics when we arrived. It was very lucky the girl had been in a child's seat."

The Peugeot was badly damaged while the taxi suffered front end damage in the collision. Nobody is thought to have been badly hurt.

Meanwhile, a woman suffered minor injuries in a separate crash in Dudley involving two cars. The smash happened around 8pm on Saturday on the Halesowen Road. Two fire crews, one from Dudley and another from Haden Cross, attended as it was initially feared the woman, in her 30s, would have to be cut free. But ambulance crews managed to get her out of the vehicle. She was taken to hospital suffering neck and back pain.

Watch commander Dave Smith said: "We went out because it was thought the woman was trapped due to her injuries but the heart care team from Birmingham managed to get her out."

Third suspect now arrested after shooting

DETECTIVES investigating a double shooting in Birmingham arrested a third person on suspicion of murder after swooping on an address in Tividale.

A firearms warrant was executed in Tividale on Friday night and a Birmingham man was arrested on suspicion of murder.

The 33-year-old is being questioned by detectives investigating the murder of 25-year-old Derek Junior Myers on October 30 in Soho Hill, Hockley.

A second man, who was injured during the incident, was in a critical condition in hospital.

Two other men remained on police bail while enquiries continued.

Detective Chief Inspector Caroline Marsh, who is leading the investigation, said: "My team of detectives continue to sift through information to identify those who were involved in this incident.

"A man has lost his life and another remains critical in hospital and we would continue to appeal for anyone with information to come forward and contact us.

"If you were there or have been told anything about what happened, please get in touch."

Anyone with information for the investigation is asked to contact DCI Marsh on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

National Express run Christmas Day buses

BUSES will be running from Wolverhampton to London, Birmingham and Coventry on Christmas Day.

National Express has announced it will also be running the same services from Dudley.

The news will be welcomed by travellers as there will be no train services across the country running.

With a limited train service on Boxing Day as well, National Express said it is running a near-full schedule.

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www.qkm.org.uk FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

Revival of Broadway classic is on the way

Coming to Birmingham — a scene from Frank Loesser's colourful New York musical Guys And Dolls, set in the early 1950s

BILLED as the most perfect musical comedy ever, much-loved classic Guys And Dolls comes to Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Tuesday, November 24 to Saturday, December 5.

The Alex hosts this highly acclaimed Chichester Festival Theatre production prior to a limited run at the Savoy Theatre in London's West End.

Joining Sophie Thompson as Miss Adelaide and Jamie Parker as Sky Masterson, are David Haig as Nathan Detroit and Siubhan Harrison as Sarah Brown.

Guys And Dolls will see Sophie Thompson and David Haig perform together for the first time since their comic pairing as bride and groom, Lydia and Bernard, in the British smash hit film, Four Weddings And A Funeral.

Vibrant

A joyous and vibrant celebration of New York, Guys And Dolls first premiered on Broadway in 1950 and captured the optimism and energy of post-war America.

Based on 1930s stories by American journalist Damon Runyon, renowned for his vivid depictions of the gamblers, hustlers and nightclub singers of New York, this multi award-winning musical features some of Broadway's greatest numbers including Luck Be A Lady and the show-stopping Sit Down You're Rockin' The Boat.

Guys And Dolls is directed by Gordon Greenberg with choreography by Cuban dancer and Royal Ballet star Carlos Acosta with Andrew Wright whose credits include Chichester Festival Theatre's Singin' In The Rain.

See www.atgtickets.com/venues/new-alexandra-theatre-birmingham or call 0844 8713011.

Chvrches draw faithful on a big night of gigs

SCOTTISH synth-pop sensations Chvrches comes to Birmingham on Wednesday, November 25, as part of an eight-date UK tour.

Fronted by former journalist Lauren Mayberry, the Glaswegian trio who first made a stir in 2012 with Lies and The Mother We Share, also feature Iain Cook and Martin Doherty.

They released debut album The Bones of What You Believe in 2013 and in September this year released second album Every Open Eye.

That Wednesday will be a busy gig evening in the second city with singer and songwriter James Morrison playing a sold out concert at the Birmingham Institute featuring songs from his newly released fourth album Higher Than Here.

Meanwhile, rock fans will be heading for Digbeth venue The Rainbow where Mini Mansions will be performing songs from their acclaimed debut album The Great Pretenders. The Los Angeles trio include Queens Of The Stone Age bass player Michael Shuman and the gig coincides with the release of new single Double Visions.

Expect a blizzard of fierce noise when Yak play the Sunflower Lounge in Birmingham tonight (Thu) or go to Stourbridge River Rooms for young London blues rockers Hidden Charms.

Stadium rockers Imagine Dragons take their Smoke + Mirrors tour to the Barclaycard Arena tomorrow.

Wolverhampton Civic Hall hosts its own monsters of rock with a sold out show by Marilyn Manson on Saturday and West Midlands metal legends Judas Priest on Thursday, November 26, with Michael Schenker Group.

Manchester's dance-rock pioneers New Order, back with new album Music Complete, have sold out the Civic Hall on Tuesday, as have young punk duo Slaves on Wednesday.

Glaswegian trio Chvrches recently released their second album Every Open Eye

American country rock rebel Brantley Gilbert, a major star stateside, is in concert at the O2 Institute in Digbeth tonight (Thu). There's more country at the same venue on Saturday with Nashville's Striking Matches, duo Justin Davis and Sarah Zimmermann.

Dub step and electronic dance outfit Nero are at the O2 Institute tomorrow night, as are London grime stars Krept and Konan in another room.

Songwriter

Nottingham singer-songwriter Saint Raymond, AKA 20-year-old Callum Burrows, is at the O2 Institute on Saturday with support from Louis Berry.

It's heading for a sell out at the Hare and Hounds in Kings Heath tonight for the gig by Albert Hammond Jr, of The Strokes, playing songs from his third solo album Momentary Masters. Also that night ain the other upstairs room will be Irish stars Keywest. The Dublin band have scored five no1 singles in their homeland and two hit albums. American folk-rocker Elvis Perkins, son of Psycho actor Anthony Perkins, is at the Hare and Hounds on Sunday night.

Other gigs at the venue including darkly romantic electronic rock from Ten Fe on Monday, New York indie rock duo Molly Hamilton and Robert Earl Thomas — known as Widowspeak — on Monday. Obaro Ejimiwe, better known as Ghostpoet, brings his atmospheric blend of jazz, rap and trip-hop to the Hare and Hounds on Tuesday, as heard on acclaimed album Shedding Skin, and psychedelic outfit Landshapes play on Wednesday.

Molotov Jukebox, fronted by Game of Thrones and Harry Potter actress Natalia Tena, bring tgood time Balkan-gypsy rock to The Rainbow on Thursday, November 26. This Tuesday the Rainbow hosts urban folk singer Beans On Toast, whose album Rolling Up The Hill is out next month.

The Fizzogs are massive in Mongolia

Something to smile about — Black Country troupe The Fizzogs are a hit in Mongolia too with their dancing grannies routine

DANCING grannies sensation The Fizzogs have won over thousands of fans in the West Midlands – and now the comedy trio are a hit in Asia too.

A staggering eight million people have now viewed the group's Dancing Grannies routine after a video of them was picked up by a Mongolian record label.

The group have appeared at events across the Black Country and this year visited the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

But now they are spreading their wings after they became a YouTube hit.

The online video shows Fizzogs Sue Hawkins, Deb Nicholls and Jacky Fellows performing one of their dances to South Korean star Psy's Gangnam Style at Edinburgh in the summer.

It is the second time the Grannies have been projected on to the internet after their dance at the Stourbridge Festival went viral earlier this year.

But this latest outbreak of Fizzog mania has mystified the three founder members of the group.

Sue Hawkins said: "We don't really know how the Mongolian company picked up the video. Maybe it's because the music is by a South Korean star, which would explain its appeal in the Far East.

"We haven't a clue what is being said on the Mongolian Facebook page about us. We have tried to get it translated via Google without any success. What we might do now is contact the Mongolian Embassy in London to see if they can help us. The response to the video has been amazing. At one time we calculated it was being viewed at the rate of 8,000 times a minute. It's just gone crazy."

The Mongolian record company site is called Zowhon Sonirholtoi Bichleg Zurag.

The Fizzogs are rehearsing for their coming pantomime Freezin', a Black Country spoof of the film Frozen. For more details visit www.thefizzogs.com

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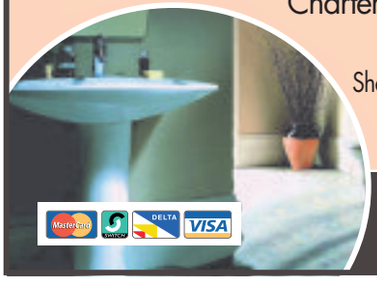

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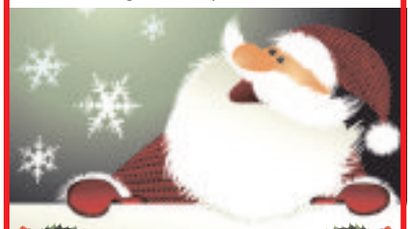

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Fri at 7pm, £25 - £28
Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Pond Floyd: Pink Floyd Tribute
Sun at 12pm, £8 - £10
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Pale + Support
Fri at 10pm, £3-5
The Grapes, Stafford ST16 2HZ. Call 07989 174631

James Morrison
Wed at 7pm, £26.50
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Tankus The Henge
Sat - Sun at 8pm - 1am, £6
The Boars Head, Kidderminster, DY10 1EW.
Call 01562 861870

Cliff & The Shadz
Mon at 7.30pm, £10 - £12
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Imagine Dragons
Fri at 7.30pm, £30
Barclaycard Arena, B1 2AA.
Call 0121 780 4141

New Order - SOLD OUT
Tue at 7pm, £37.50
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

Backyard Babies
Sun at 7pm, £16
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

The Wailers
Fri at 6pm, £19.50
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Nickelback: No Fixed Address
Sat at 6.30pm, £38.50
Genting Arena, Birmingham, B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

Bon Giovi
Sat at 7.30pm, £12 - £13
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. 01902 401211

Judas Priest
Thu at 7pm, £38.50
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Modestep
Thu at 7pm, £14
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Slaves - SOLD OUT
Wed at 7pm, £13.50
Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Abbamania: Tribute To Abba
Fri at 7.30pm, £19.50
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
Call 01543 412121

Sat at 7.30pm, £19.50
Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Sack Sabbath: Black Sabbath Tribute And Mentallica: Metallica Tribute
Sat at 7pm,
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Four Star Mary
Thu at 7pm,
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Amped
Wed at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Definitely Might Be And Adored: Oasis And The Stone Roses Tribute
Fri at 7.30pm, £8
The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN. 01384 397177

Brit Floyd
Sun at 7.30pm, £29.50
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Akala
Thu at 7.30pm, £20
Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN.
Call 01902 572090

Mini Mansions
Wed at 7.30pm, £10
The Rainbow, Birmingham, B12 0LD.
Call 0121 753 1818

Rhino And The Ranters
Sat at 12am, £6 - £7
Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB. Call 01384 374410

Chvrches
Wed at 7pm, £17.50
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

Stillmarillion: Marillion Tribute
Sun at 8.45pm, £10 - £12
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Ricky Ross
Sun at 8pm, £24.50
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ.
Call 0121 780 3333

FOLK & ACOUSTIC

Bellowhead: The Farewell Tour
Wed at 7pm, £19.50 - £24.50
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

Lau
Sun at 7pm - 11pm, £17.50
The Glee Club, Birmingham, B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

Calan
Sat at 7.30pm, £12.50
Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN.
Call 01902 572090

The Neon Collective
Tue at 8.30pm, £5
Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN.
Call 01902 572090

Steeleye Span
Thu at 7.30pm, £19.50 - £22.50
Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 578762

Celtic Roots Night
Fri at 7.30pm, £8
St George's Hall, Bewdley
Call 01299 40011

Sunjay
Fri at 8pm, £8
Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.
Call 01384 374410

JAZZ & BLUES

Room 4 The Blues - Session
Fri, 9pm
Claregate Pub, Tettenhall, WV6 9ED.
Call 01902 754761

Stonepunch
Sun at 9pm
The Grapes, Stafford, ST16 2HZ. Call 07989 174631

Jazz Club 90 - Bev Pegg's Railroad Skiffle Trio
Sun at 1pm, £5
Albrighton Sports and Social Club, WV7 3QT
Call 07947 668750

CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC

The Big Band At Christmas
Thu at 7.30pm,
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

Rising Stars - Harriet Krijgh
Mon at 6pm - 9pm, £10
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ.
Call 0121 780 3333

Lee Mead: Some Enchanted Christmas Evening
Sat at 7.30pm,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
Call 01543 412121

Brass Minifest
Mon, times vary, £4
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University, B3 3HG. Call 0121 331 5901

THEATRE

Welsh National Opera: Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street
Fri at 7.15pm, Sat at 7.15pm, £11.50 - £109.50
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

Beryl
Tue at 7pm, Wed at 7.45pm, Thu at 2.45pm, 7.45pm, £17 - £20
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

Contained
Fri at 7.30pm,
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE. Call 01902 321321

The Lion The Witch And The Wardrobe
Mon at 10.15am, Tue at 10.15am, Wed at 2.30pm, 7pm, Thu at 2.30pm, 7pm, £7.50 - £35
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

Calamity Jane: Redditch Operatic Society
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm, 7.30pm,
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE.
Call 01527 65203

Guys And Dolls
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm, £15 - £47.50
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

Peppa Pig's Surprise
Sat at 10am, 1pm, 4pm, Sun at 10am, 1pm, 4pm, £13.50 - £22.90
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Treasure Island
Fri at 10.15am, 1.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm, 7pm, Sun at 1pm, 5pm, Tue at 2.30pm, 7pm, Wed at 10.15am, 1.30pm, Thu at 10.15am, 1.30pm,
The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DY.
Call 0121 605 5116

Last Night A DJ Saved My Life
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, £17 - £54.14
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Elvis That's The Way It Was
Fri at 7.30pm, £19.50
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

A Murder Is Announced
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm, £15.50 - £26
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

COMEDY

Dave Gorman: Gets Straight To The Point (The PowerPoint)
Thu at 8pm, £24
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

One Man Breaking Bad: The Unauthorised Parody
Wed at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

TALKS

Sally Morgan: Psychic Sally On The Road
Thu at 7.30pm, £23.50 - £27.90
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

An Evening With Pam Ayres
Sun at 5pm, £25
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

OTHER EVENTS

MCM Birmingham Comic Con
Sat, Sun
The NEC Birmingham, B40 1NT.
Call 0121 780 4141

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Soraya is razor sharp as Johanna

IN the world of musical theatre, there are few singers as exciting as Soraya Mafi.

In 2014, she won the Maggie Teyte Prize, and this year took second in the Kathleen Ferrier Awards and was the winner in the 2015 Royal Overseas League. Make no mistake, Mafi is a major new talent.

The former shop assistant from Bury graduated from the Royal College of Music, and can now be seen as the tragic Johanna when Welsh National Opera bring Stephen Sondheim's Sweeney Todd to Birmingham Hippodrome from tonight (Thu) to Saturday.

Mafi's credits have included roles in Peter Grimes, Il re pastore, Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado and Dido and Aeneas (for BBC Radio 3), not to mention the title role Arianna in Creta at the London Handel Festival plus roles in WNO's productions of I Puritani and Orlando earlier this week.

She stars alongside baritone David Arnsperger as Sweeney Todd and Scottish soprano Janis Kelly as Mrs Lovett in the gory Victorian story updated to the 1970s.

"It's a wonderful story," she says. "Sweeney Todd has come back from being abroad, having been banished, and he is seeking revenge on Judge Turpin. When he returns, he discovers that his daughter, Johanna, who I play, is being held captive.

"She's a teenage girl, aged 16 or 17. She's been stuck in her bedroom reading for years and questions whether her existence is normal. She's struggling with life and asking how she can cope with it. She ends up at an asylum and shoots the guy who runs it. It is all action, from beginning to end."

Soraya Mafi, as Johanna, and George Newton-Fitzgerald, as Jonas Fogg, in a hard-hitting scene from Welsh National Opera's Sweeney Todd

Mafi has an operatic background but has enjoyed the switch to musical theatre. "I've faced bigger challenges than this, vocally-speaking. But in terms of energy levels, it's up there. Johanna is always on the edge.

"It's very different to what I'm used to. In general, as an opera singer, you are primarily thinking about the sound that you are creating. But with musical theatre, it has to come from the emotion of the story. You have to not be afraid to express sorrow or happiness."

'Things don't pan out the way you want them to'

Bill's not in limbo now

WHEN asked to describe his new show, Limboland, which plays Wolverhampton's Civic Hall tonight (Thu), Bill Bailey says: "It's about when things don't pan out the way you want them to. That's a rich seam comedically, the gap between how we imagine our lives to be and how they really are."

The show has proved a great hit, wowing audiences in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong and across the UK, with tonight's show the second consecutive performance in Wolverhampton.

"It's a bit different to previous shows in as much as it's more focused on personal accounts which is quite daunting at first," he said. "I do a lot of political stuff and tell stories about my family holidays that go wrong, and travels in the Arctic and jungle."

He gives an example: "I had this desire to take my whole family to see the Northern Lights, so I persuaded them all to come to Norway. I had a vision of how it was going to be, a transcendent experience, shushing beautifully through the snow then all standing in a wood surrounded by Sami tribesmen looking at the Northern Lights overhead.

"Instead we were on a white knuckle ride in the dark on a dogsled pulled by baying hounds and it was very scary. People were screaming. My wife's father fell off the back of the sled and I thought he was a goner. It was January, minus 22 and bitterly cold.

"And it was all my idea. All the time I was thinking 'why didn't we just watch a documentary about the Northern Lights?' At the same time, a little bit of you is thinking, if everyone survives, this is going in the show."

Rock 'n' roll and graphs with laughs

THERE is a varied array of one-nighters on offer this weekend.

Chas N Dave bring their Rockney songs to the Wulfrun Hall tomorrow (Fri), the same night Peter Storm performs as Elvis in That's The Way It Was next door at the Civic. Then the Wulfrun hosts Abbamania on Saturday.

Celtic Woman at the Symphony Hall on Saturday features some of Ireland's finest singers and musicians, while at Birmingham Town Hall that night Festival of the Spoken Nerd see the funny side of science in new show Just for Graphs.

The music of the 1950s is celebrated in Rock N Roll Paradise at the Wulfrun on Sunday.

Miss Marple has date with murder

JUDY Cornwell, best known as Daisy in classic sitcom Keeping Up Appearances, is putting on the tweeds and hat as Agatha Christie's elderly spinster sleuth Miss Marple. She follows in the sensibly-shoed steps of Joan Hickson, Margaret Rutherford, Angela Lansbury and Geraldine McEwan.

Miss Marple features in A Murder Is Announced, investigating when residents of Chipping Cleghorn are astonished to see an advert for a forthcoming murder in their newspaper, including time and place. The vintage mystery is at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday (28th).

Neverland and Narnia on stage

THE festive season is getting under way at the region's theatres with Birmingham Rep's main house being turned into Narnia and a new version of Peter Pan flying into Stratford.

The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe, by CS Lewis and dramatised by Adrian Mitchell, is on from tomorrow (Fri) until January 16 at Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

The Royal Shakespeare Company's gently feminist take on JM Barrie's Neverland classic, Wendy & Peter Pan by Ella Hickson, returned this week at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and continues throughout December and January.

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, November 19, 2015

Veal meat again, I trust

Seeking comfort food on a chilly night? **LEIGH SANDERS** checks out Bellagio Ristorante Italiano in West Bromwich

Perfect for a winter's evening – the Bellagio was our man's first choice for comforting food

The restaurant's interior is beautifully decorated

THROUGHOUT history, the 'gate' scandals have gripped the world with their memorable breaches of normal accepted behaviour.

While not exactly matching Watergate for its shock value, for my pal and I no meal will be the same pass without mention of . . . Vealgate.

It was a cold, dark evening when we ventured to Bellagio, tucked away in a corner of West Bromwich, so hearty, warm food was definitely called for.

Good things had been said about the restaurant. Although we had never been before, Italian places always give big portions, right?

Upon arrival, it ticked a lot of boxes. As there is also a hotel on-site the parking is ample; you should be able to find a space here no matter what day you visit.

On entering the restaurant, the positivity continues. Inside it is beautifully decorated with a modern feel and a touch of class.

Courteous

A few of the light fittings seem an odd choice, but the warm atmosphere is welcoming – especially when the weather outside is grim.

The staff are well-dressed, polite and courteous and add little touches such as taking your coats and offering menu recommendations.

We took a little while to decide on our food as the menu is vast but they didn't hurry or pester and left us to it.

The menu is pretty fish-heavy and offers up some interesting options. One of these grabbed my friend's attention straight away. Sounding like a spell straight out of Harry Potter's World, she opted for avocado diverso – the superfood fruit served with crab meat, Marie Rose sauce, smoked trout, horseradish and sun-blushed tomatoes. We wondered if you shouted the 'avocado diverso' at the waiter he may turn into some sort of amphibian wearing a bow tie. But alas, he just greeted the request with one of those warm smiles and jotted our order down on his notepad as if we hadn't been the first buffoons to try such a stunt.

My friend found the dish a little flavourless, which was a shame. It was full of contrasting textures and certainly looked great, but she thought it a little bland and had expected more given its colourful name and description.

I chose the the prosciutto Caprese consisting of Parma ham, buffalo mozzarella in basil sauce, served with sun- dried tomatoes. The cool flavour, and indeed temperature, of the mozzarella pearls offset the salty tang of the ham. Although my enjoyment was dampened slightly by my friend's insistence that the cheese looked like the nether-regions of a sheep, I thought it tasted great and they were the highlight of the dish.

Then came Vealgate. Having had a fish-based starter, my friend decided she wanted something different for her main.

Browsing the menu, the waiter and I tried to offer up helpful suggestions until something caught her eye.

"Veal is usually really nice," I said. "Why don't you try that?" The reply seemed confident enough: "Sure," she said.

So then we discussed why a lot of people don't really like veal because of what it is and where it comes from.

"What do you mean?" came the quizzical response. "Well, it is baby cow and not everyone likes that." Her jaw hit the table with such force I thought the sturdy furniture would snap in two. "Baby cow? I thought veal was deer." Her face turned a shade of red that matched the decorative bottles of wine, as she sheepishly admitted she had been thinking of venison

The saltimbocca alla Romana was described as veal scallops cooked in white wine and garnished with Parma ham and sage. When it arrived, we found out that it was literally just a plate of veal. A few leaves had been added for effect, but the dish was one dimensional. It tasted good though. The veal was tender and, as with my starter, the Parma ham added a salty backdrop to the dish. Luckily, we had added French fries on the side.

I had the penne pollo gamberetti – penne pasta topped with prawns and diced chicken in a cream sauce. It certainly was creamy; the thick texture of the sauce managed to retain its heat and warm me up as I ate. The prawns were a little bland, but the chicken was beautiful and, overall the dish was really good.

We weren't quite done yet and I was determined to find something my friend would love before heading home. She's no fussy eater by any means, but had just made the wrong choices that evening.

Dessert was our final chance to put things right. Fortunately, the caramel budino hit the spot. It was packed with contrasting textures and flavours and was a 'happy conclusion' to her meal out. The white chocolate and fruit floret went down equally well on my side of the table.

Overall it would be harsh to mark Bellagio down based on the personal preferences of one diner as one of us had fully enjoyed the evening, the other had made bad choices.

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CHOICE

Tess Daly

Strictly Come Dancing (BBC1, 6.50pm)
The pro-celebrity contest leaves the confines of the studio for its annual trip to Blackpool, where the eight remaining couples are given a chance to show of their latest routines in a programme broadcast live from the famous Tower Ballroom. As ever, Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present as judges Len Goodman, Darcey Bussell, Bruno Tonioli and Craig Revel Horwood deliver their verdicts on the various performances, and with the grand final now only one month away, the stakes will be higher than ever.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Simply Nigella. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Live Tennis: ATP World Tour Finals. The semi-finals at the O2 in London. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** Now You See It. **5.40** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Ed Baines, Paul Rankin, Tony Singh, Cyrus Todiwala, Jean-Christophe Novelli, Jo Pratt, Richard Burr and Frances Quinn compete in a "food and drink" themed edition of quiz.

6.50 Strictly Come Dancing. The pro-celebrity contest leaves the confines of the studio for its annual trip to Blackpool, where the eight remaining couples are given a chance to show of their latest routines in a programme broadcast live from the famous Tower Ballroom. As ever, Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present as judges Len Goodman, Darcey Bussell, Bruno Tonioli and Craig Revel Horwood deliver their verdicts on the various performances, and with the grand final now only one month away, the stakes will be higher than ever.

8.10 Doctor Who. The Doctor, Clara and their old friend Rigsy investigate a strange alien world hidden on a street in the heart of London, and once again cross paths with immortal Viking Ashildr.

9.00 Casualty. Iain dismisses Dixie's concerns about Jess as mere jealousy. Cal panics when baby Matilda develops a rash.

9.50 The National Lottery Live. Ore Oduba presents as the all-important winning numbers are revealed.

10.00 BBC News; Weather.

10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester City v Liverpool and Watford v Manchester United; National Lottery Update.

11.50 The Apprentice. The off duty candidates are interrupted by Lord Sugar, who gives them the challenge of opening a discount store and turning products into profit within two days. (R)

12.50 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.55 BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 NFL Highlights. **6.45 Film:** The Hunchback of Notre Dame. (1939) **8.35 Film:** Sinbad the Sailor. (1947) **10.30** Animal Park. (R) **11.00** Ronnie's Animal Crackers. (R) **11.30** Ronnie's Animal Crackers. (R) **12.00** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.45** My Life on a Plate. (R) **1.30** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **2.15** Child Stars: Talking Pictures. **2.55 Film:** In Search of the Castaways. (1962) Children's adventure, starring Hayley Mills. **4.30** Escape to the Continent. (R) **5.30** The Great Pottery Throw Down. The remaining potters have to make 10 identical long necked vases. (R)

6.30 Flog It! Thomas Plant and Anita Manning visit Warwick Castle, where they value a collection of tribal items and an extensive postcard collection. Presenter Paul Martin also takes a behind-the-scenes look at the prop and set design workshops at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon. (R)

7.30 Great Continental Railway Journeys. Michael Portillo ventures deep into the Black Forest, where he discovers how Hansel and Gretel helped to unify the German nation. (R)

8.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring devises a cunning new way of foiling Hitler's invasion plans – but it results in Pike getting trapped in the middle of a minefield. (R)

9.00 QI XL. An extended edition in which Stephen Fry is joined by Sandi Toksvig, Aisling Bea, Susan Calman and regular panellist Alan Davies to navigate the topic of mathematics.

9.45 Film: The Help. (2011) An aspiring journalist returns to her Mississippi home in the 1960s and begins documenting the lives of black servants working for wealthy white families. Her project brings the community's household staff together, but creates controversy among their employers. Drama based on Kathryn Stockett's novel, starring Emma Stone, Viola Davis, Bryce Dallas Howard and an Oscar-winning Octavia Spencer.

12.05 Film: The Painted Veil. (2006) An English doctor in 1920s China takes his unfaithful wife on a dangerous journey to a remote village ravaged by disease. Period drama based on W Somerset Maugham's novel, starring Edward Norton, Naomi Watts. **2.00** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Super 4. (R) **7.40** Adventure Time. **8.00** Marvel Avengers Assemble. **8.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** ITV News; Weather. **11.40** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.40** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.45** Judge Rinder. (R) **2.45** Doc Martin. (R) **3.45 Film:** Field of Dreams. (1989) Baseball fantasy, with Kevin Costner and Ray Liotta. **5.45** Regional Programme ; Weather.

6.00 ITV News; Weather.

6.15 Catchphrase.

7.00 The Chase: Celebrity Special. Heptathlete Louise Hazel, comedian Joel Dommett, 1980s music star Sinitta and actor Les Dennis team up to take part in the quiz show, in which they must answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit – all without being caught out by the "quiz genius" Chaser. Presented by Bradley Walsh.

8.00 The X Factor. Caroline Flack and Olly Murs present as the remaining would-be stars face their fourth live show. With casualties already having occured in Cheryl Fernandez-Versini's Groups and Simon Cowell's Overs, the pressure is continuing to increase for the contestants, who once again take to the stage to perform in front of the judges and the viewing public. Tomorrow's show will see yet another act eliminated following a tense sing-off.

9.40 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! Ant and Dec catch up with the stranded stars following their first six days in the camp, discovering whether any of them are starting to struggle with the pressures of jungle life.

10.40 The Jonathan Ross Show. One Direction join Jonathan in the studio to perform two songs and speak about their "extended hiatus" in 2016.

11.45 ITV News; Weather.

12.00 Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Peter Andre. (R) **12.55** Jackpot247. **3.00** Show Me the Telly. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.40** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.05** Mourne Skyline 2015. **7.30** The Grid. **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. **11.55** The Big Bang Theory. **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Haydock Park and Ascot. **4.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.25** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.00 Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 The World's Weirdest Weather. New series. More unusual natural phenomena, including freak hailstorms in the desert, deadly "rain bombs", underwater volcanoes that affect the weather on the surface, lakes that it is possible to walk across, and a forest of rain-carved rock. Previously seen on More4.

8.00 Grand Designs: House of the Year. Kevin McCloud reveals five more candidates vying to be crowned Riba House of the Year 2015, including a luxurious city home complete with a basement swimming pool, a concrete an brick open-plan house in Liverpool, and a geometric homestead in Northern Ireland. Plus, a Hollywood-inspired pad in north London, and a modernist villa in north Wales. (R)

9.00 Film: Red 2. (2013) Premiere. Former CIA agent Frank Moses reunites his squad of retired operatives for a vital mission. A devastatingly powerful new weapon has been stolen, and it falls to Frank's team to retrieve it – which means facing lethal assassins, terrorists and corrupt government officials out to steal the device. Action thriller sequel, starring Bruce Willis, Helen Mirren and John Malkovich.

11.20 TFI Friday. Chris Evans hosts the lively entertainment show mixing music and chat with stunts and skits, with guests including Stereophonics, Mark Ronson, ELO and Hozier. (R)

12.20 Jimmy Carr: Being Funny. (R) **1.15** Alan Carr: Chatty Man. (R) **2.10** Fargo. (R) **3.10** Hollyoaks. (R) **5.15** Hugh's 3 Good Things: Best Bites. (R) **5.25** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **9.30** The Saturday Show. **11.30 Film:** My Santa. (2013) **1.10 Film:** Snowed in at Rosemont. (2015) Premiere. Drama, starring Ayla Kell. **3.00 Film:** Christmas Mail. (2010) Comedy, starring Ashley Scott. **4.50 Film:** Naughty or Nice. (2012) Premiere. Festive fantasy, starring Hilarie Burton.

6.30 5 News Weekend.

6.35 Funniest Fails, Falls & Flops. Comedy clip show featuring pranks gone wrong, unwise acts and failed attempts of misplaced ambition. (R)

7.00 Police Interceptors. Justin Moffitt and Paul Faulkner chase down a gang of suspected car thieves, while it takes seven officers to stop a violent thief who tries to sink his teeth into them. (R)

8.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Agents Stewart McCracken and Elmore Victor head to Liverpool for what they expect to be a routine repossession, but instead face the most challenging eviction of their careers. Behind the front door, they find a critically ill two-year-old child with major heart problems, who is on constant life support and unable to breathe without a ventilator. Meanwhile, Brian O'Shaughnessy and Del Anglin chase £2,000 worth of debt owed by a business based in Kent, and recover £4,000 from a recycling business in Buckinghamshire. (R)

9.00 Football League Tonight. Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's top matches, In the Championship, Leeds United hosted manager Steve Evans' former club Rotherham United and Middlesbrough took on Queens Park Rangers at the Riverside Stadium. Plus, a round-up of the action from Leagues One and Two, discussion on the main talking points, and interviews with a selection of players and managers.

10.25 Greatest Christmas TV Moments. Countdown of 50 festive TV highlights, featuring Gavin & Stacey, Morecambe and Wise, Only Fools and Horses, Wallace and Gromit, Doctor Who, Top of the Pops and The Royle Family. (R)

1.10 SuperCasino. **3.10** BAMMA: Night of Champions. **5.00** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) **5.15** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Don't Tell the Bride **8.00** Top Gear **9.00** Russell Howard's Good News **9.30 Film:** Kidulthood (2005) **11.00** Family Guy **1.15** Russell Howard's Good News **1.45** Josh **2.15** Rent a Cop **2.45** Footballers, Sex, Money: What's Gone Wrong? **3.45** Great Movie Mistakes V: Revenge of the Fifth **4.00** Close

BBC Four
7.00 Lost Land of the Tiger **8.00** Roman Britain: A Timewatch Guide **9.00** The Bridge **11.00** Catching History's Criminals: The Forensics Story **12.00** Kings of Rock 'n' Roll **1.00** Totally British: 70s Rock 'n' Roll **3.00** Lost Land of the Tiger **4.00** Close

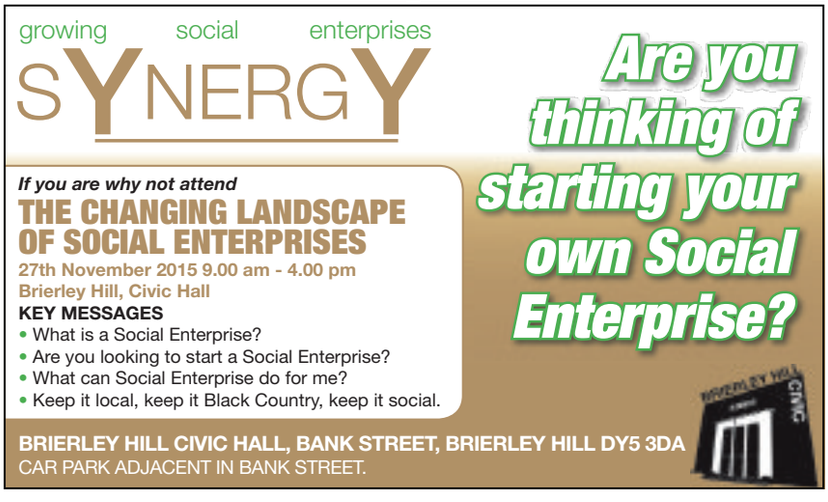
ITV2
11.00 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **12.30** The Xtra Factor **1.30** Scorpion **2.25** Totally You've Been Framed! **3.25** Catchphrase **4.05** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **5.35 Film:** Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (2005) **7.55 Film:** Hulk (2003) **10.40** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here Now! **11.40** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **12.40** Viral Tap **1.25** Crazy Beaches **1.50** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.15** Animal Practice **2.40** Teleshopping **5.40** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
2.55 Film: Columbo: Forgotten Lady (1975) **4.55** Midsomer Murders **6.55** Doc Martin **8.00** Midsomer Murders **10.00** Lewis **12.05** A Touch of Frost **2.10** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
12.45 Live World Series of Darts Finals. **5.00** Storage Wars: Texas **6.00** Fifth Gear **7.00** Live World Series of Darts Finals. **11.00 Film:** How I Spent My Summer Vacation (2012) **12.55 Film:** Unleashed (2005) **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea **12.00** Couples Come Dine with Me **2.00** Melissa & Joey **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.00 Film:** Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010) **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** The Woman in Black (2012) **11.00** Gogglebox **1.05** The Inbetweeners **2.10** The IT Crowd **3.00** Drifters **3.25** How I Met Your Mother **4.10** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.35** Revenge **5.20** Rules of Engagement

Film4
11.00 Bend of the River (1952) **1.00** Toys (1992) **3.20** Princess Mononoke (2001) **6.05** Independence Day (1996) **9.00** X-Men: First Class (2011) **11.35** Byzantium (2012) **1.50** Sightseers (2012) **3.40** Close



CHOICE

Simon Reeve

Ireland with Simon Reeve (BBC2, 8pm)
The adventurer returns with a new two-parter exploring the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Both form one of the world's most beautiful islands in the world: a region steeped in history, culture and belief, but one with a complex and troubled past. The first stop is County Wexford where Simon examines the start of the long, turbulent relationship between Britain and Ireland. He also takes a paramotor flight up along the coast, then heads to Cork where he joins the thousands who make the exhausting climb up the sacred mountain of Croagh Patrick. Then it's off to the surf town of Lahinch before heading to Northern Ireland, where he visits Crom Castle and moves on to the city of Londonderry.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Sophia: Suffragette Princess. **1.45** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.15** Regional Programme. **4.15** Songs of Praise. **4.50** The Hunt. (R) **5.50** BBC News.

6.10 Regional Programme.

6.15 Countryfile. The shows comes from Dorset, where Ellie Harrison meets the members of a very special countrymen's club and goes looking for kingfishers at an urban bird reserve in Weymouth. Matt Baker visits a woodland architecture school, where local trees are used as building materials, Jules Hudson drops in to a historic family butcher's, Adam Henson takes stock on the farm, and Tom Heap weighs up the pros and cons of dredging Britain's ports. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.

7.15 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present last night's results from the Blackpool Tower Ballroom.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents a show from Walmer Castle in Kent, where the team values a jacket worn by President Kennedy that could be one of the most valuable items on the series.

9.00 The Hunt. The hunting methods of aquatic predators, who often have to travel vast distances in search of food. Featuring footage of blue whales, frigate birds, sharks and spinner dolphins.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Tottenham Hotspur v West Ham United. Mark Chapman presents action from the Premier League clash between the London rivals at White Hart Lane.

11.15 Citizen Khan. Shazia and Amjad find it hard to cope as their baby is struggling to sleep during the night. (R)

11.45 The Graham Norton Show. Tom Hanks talks about his role in new Spielberg thriller Bridge of Spies. Plus, banter with comedian David Walliams and Doctor Who star Peter Capaldi. (R)

12.30 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.35 BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.45** The Big Allotment Challenge. (R) **7.45** Countryfile. (R) **8.45** An Island Parish: Falklands. (R) **9.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **10.45** My Life on a Plate. (R) **11.30** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **1.45 Film:** Cimarron. (1960) **4.10** Flog It! (R) **5.00** Demolition: The Wrecking Crew. (R)

6.00 Live Tennis: ATP World Tour Finals. Coverage of the singles final of the season-ending competition from the O2 in London, where Novak Djokovic has been victorious for the last three years.

7.00 Robert Peston Goes Shopping. The BBC News business editor examines the shopping boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s, which was fuelled by cheap credit and a buoyant economy. (R)

8.00 Ireland with Simon Reeve. Two-part programme exploring the history of both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. In the first episode, Simon tries to climb the sacred mountain of Croagh Patrick.

9.00 The Secret History of the British Garden. Monty Don visits Croome Castle, Worcestershire, as he turns his attention to the 18th century, when the first landscape gardens were created and a revolution in gardening occurred.

10.00 Family Guy. Lois books a couple's vacation, but it turns out to be a marriage counselling programme, while Carter is frustrated because the kids are so into their electronics. Last in the series.

10.20 Family Guy. Peter and his friends try to save the Drunken Clam when the bar's owner dies. Meanwhile, Meg gets a job at a funeral home.

10.45 Family Guy. The Griffins move to a farm after they are robbed. When the family begins to struggle financially, Peter starts an illicit drug business.

11.05 Film: All Good Things. (2010) The heir of a wealthy family marries a medical student, but is suspected of murdering her when she disappears without trace. Crime drama, starring Ryan Gosling, Kirsten Dunst, Frank Langella and Kristen Wiig.

12.40 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **1.35** Holby City. (R) **2.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Super 4. (R) **7.40** Matt Hatter Chronicles. **8.00** Marvel Avengers Assemble. **8.30** Fish Hooks. **8.45** Fish Hooks. **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.20** ITV News; Weather. **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.35** The Chase. (R) **2.30** The X Factor. (R) **4.15 Film:** The Mummy. (1999) Fantasy action adventure, starring Brendan Fraser.

6.30 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 Jekyll and Hyde. Robert discovers he has some distant relations, so he and Max travel to the remote village where they live in the hope they will be able to tell him more about the Jekyll curse. On their arrival, they discover several mysterious deaths have occurred recently and the locals believe a legendary demonic dog is responsible. Amelia Bullmore guest stars.

8.00 The X Factor. Caroline Flack and Olly Murs present the results of last night's live show, revealing which acts are safely through to the next round. The two lowest scoring contestants compete in a sing-off in front of judges Nick Grimshaw, Rita Ora, Cheryl Fernandez-Versini and Simon Cowell to decide who gets to stay in the competition and who gets eliminated.

9.00 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! Ant and Dec present the celebrity survival challenge, as the famous faces continue their ordeal in the Australian jungle, struggling to complete the tough daily tasks. As the first week draws to a close, a contestant is chosen to face the latest Bushtucker Trial.

10.05 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Film: Captain Corelli's Mandolin. (2001) A soldier in the Italian invasion force controlling the Greek island of Kefalonia falls for a local girl. Second World War romantic drama, starring Nicolas Cage and Penelope Cruz.

12.40 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **6.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.05** Chasing Perfection. **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25 Film:** Inkheart. (2008) Fantasy adventure, starring Brendan Fraser. **3.30 Film:** Rio. (2011) Animated comedy, with the voice of Jesse Eisenberg. **5.30** Channel 4 News.

6.00 Small Animal Hospital. John Barrowman checks up on a poodle with a life-threatening joint condition, a collie having eye surgery, and a cat that needs a radioactive injection for a hormonal illness.

7.00 Restoring Britain's Landmarks. Following the final push to complete the restoration of St Edward's Presbytery in Ramsgate, which was designed by architect Augustus Pugin. Elsewhere, Alastair Dick-Cleland visits an unusual Martello tower at Aldeburgh in Suffolk that is battling to stay afloat, and Anna Keay explores Appleton Water Tower in Sandringham Park, investigating its role in disease and death on the Royal Estate. Last in the series. (R)

8.00 Building Hitler's Supergun: The Plot to Destroy London. Hugh Hunt examines how the Nazis built the largest cannon in history during the Second World War, a 25-barrelled artillery piece built into a French hillside. He performs a series of experiments to determine how the weapon worked and whether it could have fulfilled its intended purpose – destroying London in its entirety. He also examines plans by the Allies to destroy it, including drone bombers and earthquake-causing weapons.

9.00 Homeland. Saul opens up to Allison, and Carrie is reunited with some old friends.

10.00 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

11.05 Film: Welcome to the Punch. (2013) Crime thriller, starring James McAvoy and Mark Strong.

12.55 Grand Designs Australia. **1.50** Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners. (R) **2.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.40** Food Unwrapped. (R) **5.05** Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Tickety Toc. (R) **6.55** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.05** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.45** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.55** Blaze and the Monster Machines. **8.20** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.40** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **8.55** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.10** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.25** LazyTown. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.30** Football League Tonight. (R) **12.00** Street Crime UK: Caught on Camera. (R) **12.30 Film:** Christmas with the Kranks. (2004) Festive comedy, starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Tim Allen. **2.20 Film:** Matchmaker Santa. (2012) Romantic comedy, with Lacey Chabert and Adam Mayfield. **4.00 Film:** Mrs Miracle. (2009) Family drama, starring Doris Roberts. **5.50 Film:** Annie Claus Is Coming to Town. (2011) Christmas fantasy, starring Maria Thayer.

7.35 5 News Weekend.

7.40 Funniest Fails, Falls & Flops. Comedy clip show featuring pranks gone wrong, unwise acts and failed attempts of misplaced ambition.

8.10 Impractical Jokers US. The guys work in a fast food restaurant and a supermarket, and are challenged to say inappropriate things to the customers. They also have to persuade members of the public to sign a ridiculous petition and have to clean up after dogs in the park.

8.35 Impractical Jokers US. The guys act as fortune tellers at a boardwalk, and try to impress women.

9.00 Film: Angels & Demons. (2009) Academic adventurer Robert Langdon is called in by the Vatican to deal with a crisis. The Pope has died and the four cardinals in line to be his successor have all been abducted by a mysterious sect that is threatening to murder them. As he searches for the kidnapped clerics, Langdon discovers the cult has an even more horrific plan in mind. Thriller sequel to The Da Vinci Code, with Tom Hanks and Ewan McGregor.

11.45 Film: Stargate. (1994) Sci-fi adventure, starring Kurt Russell and James Spader.

1.50 SuperCasino. **3.10** Eamonn & Ruth: How the Other Half Lives. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Live Tennis: ATP World Tour Finals. **9.00** Russell Howard's Good News **10.00** Comedy Fest Live 2013 **11.05** Family Guy **11.50** American Dad! **12.10** Family Guy **12.30** Josh **1.00** Rent a Cop **1.30** The Fear **2.00** Saving the Cyber Sex Girls: Stacey Dooley Investigates **3.00** Russell Howard's Good News **4.00** Close

BBC Four
7.00 Timeshift: How Britain Won the Space Race – The Story of Bernard Lovell and Jodrell Bank **8.00** Nigel Slater's Icing on the Cake **9.00** Arena: Night and Day **10.30 Film:** West (2014) **12.05** Operation Crossbow **1.05** Secrets of the Universe: Great Scientists in Their Own Words **2.05** Ceramics: How They Work

ITV2
11.20 The X Factor **1.05** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **2.10 Film:** A Cinderella Story (2004) **4.05 Film:** Happy Feet (2006) **6.15** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **7.15 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **9.00** The Xtra Factor **10.05** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here Now! **11.05** Plebs **12.05** Viral Tap **12.50** Reality Bites **1.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **1.55** Animal Practice **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.40 Film: Columbo: Forgotten Lady (1975) **2.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.55** Midsomer Murders **6.50** Sunday Night at the Palladium **7.55** Wycliffe **9.00** Lewis **11.00** Inspector Morse **1.10 Film:** Death Becomes Her (1992) **2.50** On the Buses **3.15** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
12.45 Live World Series of Darts Finals. **5.00** Storage Wars: New York **5.55** River Monsters **7.00** Live World Series of Darts Finals. **11.00** Being Kevin Pietersen **12.00** Keane and Vieira: Best of Enemies **1.20** The Big Fish Off **2.20** Tommy Cooper **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen

E4
12.30 Film: Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (2009) **2.20** Couples Come Dine with Me **4.20** The Big Bang Theory **6.15 Film:** The Karate Kid (2010) **9.00** The Big Bang Theory **10.00** The Inbetweeners **11.00** The IT Crowd **12.00 Film:** Underworld: Rise of the Lycans (2009) **1.55** Rules of Engagement **2.50** The New Normal **3.15** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 From Up on Poppy Hill (2011) **1.00** Dear John (2010) **3.05** Meet Dave (2008) **5.00** ParaNorman (2012) **6.50** Congo (1995) **9.00** Life of Pi (2012) **11.25** Adrift (2006) **1.15** Adaptation (2002) **3.35** Close

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

The Christmas Pageant, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A temperamental Broadway director takes over a small-town Christmas show, and renews her relationship with her ex-fiance. Romantic comedy, with Melissa Gilbert and Robert Mailhouse. (2011)

TUESDAY

Road to Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman hitch-hiking to her wedding has second thoughts after becoming attracted to a man who gives her a lift. Romantic comedy drama, starring Jennifer Grey and Clark Gregg. Edited for language. (2006)

WEDNESDAY

Shine, BBC1, 11.35pm
Biopic of David Helfgott, the talented but fragile Australian pianist overwhelmed by the pressure of his father's obsession with success. With Geoffrey Rush and Armin Mueller-Stahl. (1996)

The Perks of Being a Wallflower, Channel 4, 12.35am
An introverted 15-year-old fails to fit in at a 1990s high school as he copes with personal traumas and his own social awkwardness. Drama based on director Stephen Chbosky's novel, starring Logan Lerman, Emma Watson and Ezra Miller. (2012)

The Perks of Being a Wallflower, Wednesday, Channel 4, 12.35am

THURSDAY

Mrs Miracle, Channel 5, 3.10pm
A widowed pianist finds it difficult to raise his six-year-old twin sons alone and also maintain his love of music. However, by hiring a very resourceful housekeeper, he manages to turn his life around. Family drama, starring Doris Roberts. (2009)

FRIDAY

Moon, BBC2, 11.35pm
Astronaut Sam Bell has been working alone at an energy-generating base on the moon for three years and desperately longs to return home. After he is injured in an accident, he begins to discover the disturbing truth about the operation he is running, and is forced to question his own identity. Sci-fi drama, starring Sam Rockwell, with the voice of Kevin Spacey. (2009)

An affluent London street is targeted

What is the mark of a quality drama these days? A thought-provoking plot is obviously important. Great acting is pretty crucial too. Plus, the screenplay should be by an inventive writer who knows how to grip an audience.

Thankfully, new, three-part series Capital ticks all those boxes and then some.

"Through drama, Capital captures the modern Britain that I'm passionate about bringing to the channel," says Charlotte Moore, controller of BBC One. "Peter Bowker's page-turning script shines a light on the comings and goings of one London Street and cleverly interweaves a vibrant set of characters who we soon realise know very little about their neighbours."

Bowker is one of British TV's premier scribes having penned the scripts for Blackpool, Occupation, Desperate Romantics, Eric and Ernie, From There to Here and Marvellous.

Capital reunites him with the star of the latter, Toby Jones, an actor who can seemingly turn his hand to anything, from horror in The Berbarian Sound Studio to comedy with Detectorists.

"Obviously I am thrilled to be part of such a fantastic, diverse and talented cast, and also I'm excited to renew my working relationship with Pete Bowker," remarks Jones.

He'll be joined in the drama by his Dectorists colleague Rachael Stirling, as well as Lesley Sharp, Bryan Dick, Adeel Akhtar (recently seen in the BBC's excellent River) and Gemma Jones (last spotted in ITV's Unforgotten, but who also played Jones' mother in Marvellous).

"It is wonderful to see such a stellar cast starring in Capital," claims executive producer Lucy Richler. "They are sure to bring Peter Bowker's stunning scripts to life in their portrayal of such funny, true and brilliant characters. The wealth of talent involved both on- and off-screen will cement Capital as a truly special drama for BBC One."

Bowker has more often than not originated stories himself, but this time he's adapted the tale from a novel by John Lanchester, who can't wait to see the fruits of his labours: "It's going to be very exciting and very strange," he remarked when the drama was announced.

The premise is certainly intriguing. Set on Pepys Road in South London, it focuses on a group of residents who seem to have it all – or at least own properties worth millions thanks to rocketing house prices.

Among them is Roger, a banker hoping a forthcoming bonus will bring him and his spendthrift wife closer together while enabling them to pay off some debts, and local shopkeeper Ahmed, whose irresponsible brothers are the bane of his life.

Also living nearby is Petunia, an OAP in ill health who has lived in the street her whole life but must now contemplate leaving the house in which she was born, and asylum seeker Quentina, who receives nothing but abuse from its residents – she's a traffic warden.

One morning, each of them receives an anonymous message stating 'we want what you have'. But who sent it, and why are they targeting this street?

Toby Jones stars in Capital, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Tomorrow's Food
BBC1, 9pm
Over the past decade, Dara O Briain has proved himself to be one of TV's most valuable players, partly because he can break down scientific fact into bite-sized chunks. And on the subject of eating, this new series should also ensure we never look at our snacks and meals in the same way again. Dara and a team of experts take a closer look at state-of-the-art technologies which are revolutionising the way food is grown, bought and eaten around the globe. In episode one, our host is Kent-bound and visits hi-tech greenhouse farm Thanet Earth where they grow a huge quantity of fruit and veg throughout the year without any soil.

London Spy
BBC2, 9pm
During a brutal interrogation, the police accuse Danny of being responsible for Alex's death and he realises he is being framed as he is confronted with an increasing amount of incriminating evidence. He is then knocked sideways by a devastating revelation and turns to the only person who can help him – Scottie. The pair plunge into the world of Westminster politics and end up in a situation that threatens to swallow them both. .

TUESDAY

CATASTROPHE
Channel 4, 10pm
Sharon convinces Rob that now is a good time to return to teaching. However, when she finally secures a meeting with the Head Mistress, the conversation soon becomes a damburst of emotion for Sharon. Over at Rob's office, matters have become awkward around Olivia since he turned down her indecent proposal.

WEDNESDAY

THE APPRENTICE
BBC1, 9pm
The contestants are summoned to the Museum of Childhood, where Lord Sugar instructs them to become party planners – surely an odd challenge for entrepreneurs to master, but it's all part of the game, it seems. The teams have two days to set up and host a children's party for some high spending clients, giving them the challenge of keeping an eye on profits and dealing with demanding customers. For one team, a massive oversight threatens the success of the task. On the other team, the entrepreneurs' efforts miss the mark with a lacklustre assault course, and a blunder with the party gifts.

Peep Show
Channel 4, 10pm
As Jeremy's love life takes a surprising turn, Mark deals with his own matters of the heart. A girl he has had a crush on since university is launching her new book, so he seizes the opportunity to see her, telling himself it is endurance, not stalking. He invents a fictitious dinner party to get her into the flat, but things do not look good when she calls to ask if she can bring her husband.

Peep Show, Wednesday, Channel 4, 10pm

THURSDAY

BEN FOGLE: NEW LIVES IN THE UK
Channel 5, 9pm
Ben meets 40-year-old Amanda Owen from Huddersfield, who left behind a comfortable existence to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming a hill shepherdess. Despite having no background in farming, she now lives at a 2,000-acre farm in the Yorkshire Dales with husband Clive and their eight children. Ben is given a taste of life as a hill shepherd, learns the highs and lows of farming life and finds out how she copes looking after such a huge family as well as her 1,000 native Swaledale sheep.

FRIDAY

UNREPORTED WORLD
Channel 4, 7.30pm
This latest series of hard-hitting documentaries bows out with reporter Seyi Rhodes and director Mike Healy travelling to Brazil to meet some of the nation's newest celebrities – child preachers who attract large crowds of people who believe the youngsters are in direct contact with God and that some can even perform miracles and cure the sick.

Gino's Italian Escape – Islands in the Sun
ITV, 8pm
On Sardinia, chef Gino D'Acampo takes a fishing trip and learns how fishing in the deep blue waters runs a close run second in importance to farming on the island. He then visits the bustling capital city of Cagliari, where he is introduced to the unique textures that the locals use to enhance their fish dishes.

Express & Star READER OFFER

Letters from Father Christmas

Christmas is the most magical time of year, so deliver some of that magic to someone you love this year!

Imagine the look of delight on your little one's face when they receive their very own personalised letter from Father Christmas!

For just £4.99 per child, they will receive a personalised letter with good behaviour certificate, a festive colouring picture and a festive door hanger to use on Christmas Eve. The pack will be sent in a Christmas themed envelope with free postage.

How to Order

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_____ Postcode: _____

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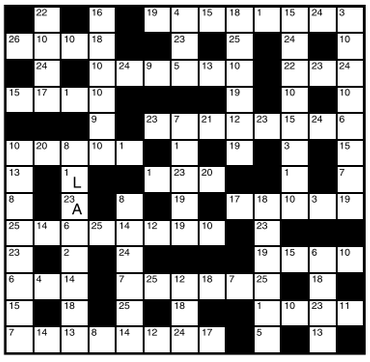
PHONE FOR BROCHURE

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, November 19, 2015

BRAIN GYM No.352

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1 L	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23 A
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
K	W	F	N	U	S	V	I	X	Y	R	H	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Q	G	O	L	E	P	A	T	B	C	D	M	J

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

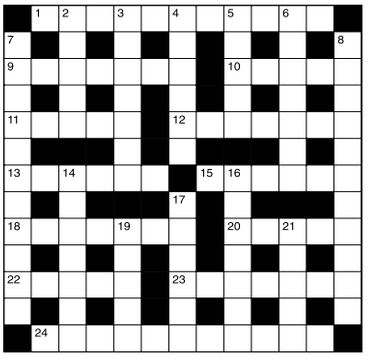
Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Displace labourer doing duty at different times (5,6)
9. A close shave for brother's capital (7)
10 & 21Dn. Like thinkers (5,5)
11 & 22Ac. Position for a bronze (5,5)
12. Taken by coach (7)
13. Commanding officer returns with unfinished oath, as it happens (6)
15. I want a change from Formosa (6)
18. Company gets clear arrangement for this vessel (7)
20. Therefore music partly features a classical figure (5)
22. See 11 Across
23. Maybe I can hit the bottle from Italy! (7)
24. Brutality shown by rows among quadrupeds (11)

Down

2. Method of communication in British India (5)
3. One of the first members to come to grief (7)
4. Reconstruct the war memorial for the dead (6)
5. Correct prerogative (5)
6 & 17Dn. This is used to put the pupil under heavier lashes! (7,6)
7. An aid for one engaged in heart-searching (11)
8. Not a vessel used for educational cruise! (11)
14. Anxiety about horse slaughter (7)
16. Level accusation against a sovereign term, by the sound of it (7)
17. See 6 Down
19. They are employed on vessels for a sea-trip, one hears (5)
21. See 10 Across



Quick Clues:

Across

1. Not easily described (11)
9. Voter (7)
10. Power (5)
11. Ledge (5)
12. Gorge (7)
13. Remember (6)
15. Quantity (6)
18. Wind (7)
20. Overturn (5)
22. Sound (5)
23. In brisk time (7)
24. Riches (11)

Down

2. Fat (5)
3. Obedient (7)
4. Sadness (6)
5. Fire-arm (5)
6. Upstart (7)
7. Dimension (11)
8. Poverty (11)
14. Goblet (7)
16. Half-drunk (7)
17. Sermonise (6)
19. Live (5)
21. Symptoms (5)

Sudoku

		8			1			5
4				8		7	3	
9			5					1
		4		9			5	2
5				4				9
2	3		1					
					9			3
3	9	7		1			6	8
6			7		8	5		

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

9	1	2	3	4	6	5	8	7
4	6	5	2	7	8	1	9	3
3	8	7	9	5	1	6	2	4
5	7	1	8	3	9	4	6	2
8	9	3	4	6	2	7	5	1
2	4	6	7	1	5	9	3	8
6	3	9	1	8	7	2	4	5
1	2	8	5	9	4	3	7	6
7	5	4	6	2	3	8	1	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Acid test; 5 Toga; 9 Imps; 10 Last year; 11 Issue; 12 Foundry; 13 Loses one's head; 18 Military; 19 Away; 20 Tension; 21 Light; 22 Drew; 23 Renegade. Down: 2 Comes to; 3 Dispute; 4 Staff entrance; 6 Overdue; 7 Arrayed; 8 Stoups; 13 Limited; 14 Silence; 15 Sets in; 16 Hearing; 17 Abashed. QUICK - Across: 1 Gratuity; 5 Dear; 9 Also; 10 Arrogant; 11 Major; 12 Tripper; 13 Head over heels; 18 Arcadian; 19 Pick; 20 Travail; 21 Meant; 22 Nick; 23 Assisted. Down: 2 Release; 3 Two-fold; 4 Turn the tables; 6 Example; 7 Returns; 8 Polish; 13 Hearten; 14 Archaic; 15 Ordeal; 16 Express; 17 License.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. In which magazine were The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes serialised?
2. Which two dams were destroyed by the 'bouncing bombs' of Barnes Wallis?
3. Who wrote the hymn 'Hark, the Herald Angels sing'?
4. Which dynastic family ruled in Brandenberg-Prussia from 1415-1918?
5. What is the largest British prison for women?
6. In which city are The Gorbals?
7. From which country does the cheese Port Salut come?
8. In which year was Popeye created?
9. Who is the Greek equivalent of the Roman sun-god Sol?
10. In what century was the Taj Mahal built?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Two; 2 H.G. Wells; 3 1910; 4 1936-9; 5 September; 6 A fish; 7 A waxy substance produced in the intestines of the sperm whale; 8 Six; 9 Rene Descartes; 10 Buffalo Bill.

Niner: MANIFESTO

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

143498 gives a month,
148457 gives a season,
945562 gives another season.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Upgrades for Volvo SUV

By Sharon Walters

Volvo Car UK is enhancing the performance of its award-winning XC90 with a series of Polestar-developed upgrades. This is the first time that Polestar, Volvo's performance brand, has focused its attention on the new seven-seat SUV.

Known as Polestar Performance Optimisation, the upgrades improve the power and torque figures of both the D5 diesel and T6 petrol Drive-E engines, particularly at medium revs where it's most effective.

They also make the accelerator responses even quicker, and alter the settings of the automatic gearbox to provide faster gearchanges and prevent gearshifts during rapid cornering, which could unsettle the car. These quicker and more precise responses to driver commands not only make the driving experience more dynamic, they ensure the car responds predictably during high-speed driving.

The upgrades have been developed and designed by the engineers of Polestar and the racing drivers of Polestar Cyan Racing, the official motorsport partner to Polestar.

Thed Björk, reigning Scandinavian Touring Car Championship (STCC) champion and Polestar Cyan Racing driver, said: "The new Polestar optimisation is about making the car more dynamic and responsive to drive.

"We use the same philosophy as when optimising our race cars, to create a completely balanced package. And this is exactly what we have focussed on with the new-generation optimisations for Volvo cars: powertrain optimisation for real-life driving."

Increased

The maximum output of the D5 Drive-E engine is increased to 233 hp and 500 Nm of torque (up from 225 hp and 470 Nm), while the T6 Drive-E is boosted to 334 hp and 440 Nm (from 320 hp and 400 Nm).

Polestar Performance Optimisations have also been released for the D4 diesel and T5 petrol Drive-E engines in other Volvo models.

Like the upgrades to the D5 and T6 engines in the XC90, the aim is to boost medium-rev performance and to make the car's entire drivetrain react more quickly and accurately to driver commands.

With the Polestar Performance Optimisation, the D4 Drive-E offers 200 hp and 440 Nm (up from 190 hp and 400 Nm), while the output of the T5 Drive-E is raised to 253 hp and 400 Nm (from 245 hp and 350 Nm).

The D4 Drive-E upgrades are available in the S60, V40, V40 Cross Country, V60 and XC60, and the T5 Drive-E enhancements are offered in the V40 and V40 Cross Country.

The price of the D4, D5*, T5 and T6 Polestar upgrades is £835, including VAT and fitting.

'We use the same philosophy as when optimising our race cars, to create a completely balanced package'

The work can be carried out at any authorised Volvo dealer, and should take about 30 minutes to complete.

Nick Connor, Managing Director of Volvo Car UK, said: "These new Polestar Performance Optimisations make our cars and Drive-E engines even more dynamic and desirable. The combination of increased power and torque – especially at medium revs – and the changes to make the entire drivetrain more responsive ensure that owners will really feel the difference these optimisations make."

Finally, until the end of December 2015, all model-year 2005 to model-year 2015 all-wheel-drive Volvos can be upgraded with the Polestar Performance Optimisation at the discounted price of £620, saving £215.

The Polestar upgrades do not affect the certified emissions and fuel consumption figures, service intervals or Volvo warranty cover. For more information on the Volvo range, Drive-E engines and Polestar, please visit www.volvocars.com/uk

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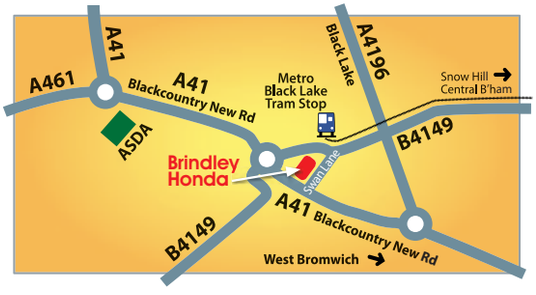

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65 plate sales pass 100,000

By Sharon Walters

UK market leader Ford recorded 101,598 65-plate registrations during September and October, as it stretched its sales leads in total vehicle, car and commercial vehicles. Ford commercial vehicle (CV) sales are more than double those of its nearest rival.

According to the official October sales figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT):

- Ford is the UK market leader in total vehicle, car and CV sales Fiesta is UK best-seller; Transit Custom and Transit first and second in CV sales
- Transit range is second in UK total vehicle sales
- Ford's car sales lead increased 20 per cent, compared with October 2014
- Ford has five models in the UK Top 20 – Fiesta (1st), Focus (4th), Transit Custom (9th), Transit (16th) and Kuga (18th)

Andy Barratt, Ford of Britain chairman and managing director, said: "Ford is building on the strength of its core models in the UK market, while stretching into new segments with models such as Mustang, Mondeo Vignale and Ford Edge.

"Fiesta is in its seventh year as the UK market leader, while the success of our extended Ford CV family is demonstrated by Transit range sales exceeding those of any car – apart from Fiesta.

"Our strong results are a direct result of the wider range of these exciting new models – delivered through our dealer partners, who make up the strongest network in the UK."

The official figures released by the SMMT today show that total car sales in October were down 1.1 per cent to 177,664 units, compared with October 2014.

Ford car sales were 22,081, 6,190 registrations ahead of its nearest rival. For the year to date (end October) total UK car sales were 2,274,550, up 6.4 per cent compared with the same period in 2014. Ford car sales for this period were 290,409, some 62,418 registrations ahead of its nearest rival.

Ford is also the clear leader in retail car sales, which most accurately reflect the preferences of private buyers.

For October, Ford's retail car sales beat a shrinking retail market and increased 8.2 per cent, compared with October 2014. At 13.1 per cent, Ford's retail car sales share was 5.1 percentage points ahead of its nearest rival, and for the year to date, Ford's retail car sales share was 12.3 per cent, a lead of 4.2 percentage points.

Significant

The Ford Fiesta is the UK's top seller and in October it recorded 8,577 registrations, 3,516 ahead of its nearest rival. With total registrations of 116,631 for the year to date, the Ford Fiesta is the UK best seller by a significant margin – 38,735 sales and 1.7 percentage points of market share ahead of its nearest competitor.

Ford's broad customer appeal across its car range is demonstrated by Fiesta, B-MAX, Focus, C-MAX, Kuga and Galaxy all occupying top three places in their respective market segments.

Ford Kuga sales are at the highest level since it was launched with October registrations of 2,343, up 12.0 per cent, compared with October 2014, and sales for the year to date of 27,948, up 33.1 per cent, compared with the same period in 2014.

'The Ford Fiesta is the UK's top seller and in October it recorded 8,577 registrations'

UK commercial vehicle sales in October were down 3.6 per cent at 34,228, compared with October 2014. At 8,344, total sales of Ford CVs were up 10.9 per cent, compared with October 2014.

Total

For the year to date total UK CV sales were up 16.3 per cent at 360,168, compared with the same period in 2014. Total sales of Ford CVs for the year to date were up 22.3 per cent at 89,177, compared with 2014.Ford light commercials sales for the year to date were up from 14,589 to 19,539, compared with the same period in 2014 and Ford medium commercials sales for the year to date were up from 58,316 to 69,638, compared with 2014.

The full availability of Ford's extended CV family has helped deliver this strong sales momentum. Fiesta Van, Transit Connect, Transit Custom, Transit and Ranger all lead their respective market segments.

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Magnificent MX-5 now even better

By John Griffiths

Cars come and go but some remain: they become legends in their own lifetime (and in some cases for long afterwards).

Think Mini, E-Type, Land Rover and the subject of this test, the latest, fourth generation Mazda MX-5.

For decades even the weather couldn't put a damper on the British love affair with roadsters: not exotic and expensive supercars but honest two seaters which offer performance with the opportunity for wind in your hair motoring where ownership is at least within many people's grasp.

The new version, priced from £18,310, is true to the MX-5 philosophy and, with the application of new technology and construction methods, it's better than ever. It has two new, more efficient engines and is a whole 100kg lighter than its predecessor – a precursor for improved performance and fuel economy, lower emissions and sharper handling.

One of the things I like about the MX-5 is that when Mazda came up with the concept in the late 1980s it was actually looking back, not forward (brave, that). The idea of a front engined, rear wheel drive and relatively simple roadster was inspired by past greats such as the Triumph Spitfire.

At that time there was one real competitor, the Alfa Romeo Spider, as other car makers (and buyers) had been seduced away from the genre by the Gti phenomenon. The MX-5 soon made them think again, with the likes of the MGF, Toyota MR2 and Porsche Boxster hitting the showrooms.

The new car's sleek, purposeful shape looks as if it might have been the proud product of an Italian design house, and conceals its secrets well. It's slightly smaller footprint disguises the fact that it retains the same amount of space for passengers and luggage as its predecessor.

It's also shed a lot of weight as part of Mazda's 'SKYACTIV' principles which now feature in every one of its new cars, but is especially significant in a sports model.

Efficiency

It's lighter, it's stronger and more rigid thanks to the use of new materials and methods, while SKYACTIV also means re-engineering engines and gearboxes for improved efficiency.

There are two engine options, both petrol, of 1,5 and 2.0 litre capacity mated to really slick, short throw six-speed gearboxes.

The 1.5 has 131PS, boasting a 0 to 62mph time of 8.3 seconds, an official fuel average of 47.1mpg and a 139g/km CO2 rating. For comparison the two litre unit's vital statistics are 7.3 seconds, 40.9mpg and 161g/km.

Both are very responsive, with convincing in-gear acceleration when an overtaking opportunity arises, although clearly the bigger block has the edge.

Both cars are lower than their predecessor, but the 2.0 litre also has uprated sports suspension with Bilstein dampers which given it an edge in handling and response, too.

The driving experience is little short of superb. The MX-5's interior is beautifully designed, with driver and passenger in well-shaped, supportive seats either side of the transmission which places gear stick and handbrake in easy grasp.

As well as weight loss and a stiffer body, Mazda's engineers have worked hard on making the car not only handle even better, but more fun to drive.

The steering rack is even quicker, providing sharp responses and driver feel which is, at first sight, surprising as they've gone for an electromechanical system for the first time. The front wheel castor angle is increased to improve resistance to understeer while the electronic stability and traction control systems calm any tendency to wayward behaviour at the other end

For many, there's nothing quite like the feel you get with rear wheel drive, and a perfect 50:50 front to rear weight distribution as in the MX-5. It's hard to explain, but you don't have to be a boy racer with a right foot flat to the floor to enjoy, and feel rewarded, as you thread the MX-5 along winding B-roads.

To someone with almost 50 years of driving behind him, it brings back the sheer pleasure of just driving.

The new MX-5 retains the manually retractable fabric roof which most people will be able to open/close without leaving the driving seat.

All versions have LED headlights and features such as alloy wheels electric windows and (heated) door mirrors, a stereo radio/CD player with connectivity package and a leather stearing wheel.

Prices start at £18,495 for the 1.5 litre and £20,095 for the 2.0 litre model and there are three trim levels for each. Insurance groups range from 26E to 29E and they all come with a three years or 60,000 mile warranty.

The MX-5 has been a hit from the word go, and this fourth generation model is no exception. British dealers took more than 1,000 advance orders before it officially went on sale and it has also chalked up a 'Cabriolet of the Year' title.

Great styling, competent performance, the promise of top down driving and sensible running costs are big attractions for car buyers and the MX-5 gives them the full package. Mazda has stuck to its principles which saw the first model back in 1989 – lightweight, fun and affordable – but with the benefit of 25 years of improvements under its belt.

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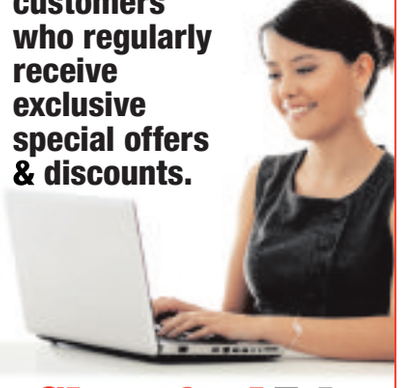

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A FURNISHED ROOM TV, CH, all bills, own kitchen area, £240pcm. Stafford Rd, W'ton 07957 595840.

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fully furnished, refurbished to high standard, with off road parking, would suit working gent, age 45+.
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WOVLERHAMPTON, Bedsits available, Cannock Road, clean, with 2 powershowers. Weekly cleaner, over 35's only, £325. 07815 290860.

Classified Ads

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overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

BMW 320i M-SPORT
4Dr, 6-speed, blue, 57 plate, fsh, 12 months MoT to next year 2016, good condition.
£5,300 ono.
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FIAT PUNTO 1.2, light blue, 57 reg, 47,000 miles, £2,600 ono. 01902 651101.

HONDA JAZZ SE
1400cc, 02, 52 reg, 5-dr, AC, sunroof, EW, MoT October 2016, Honda history, 28,000 miles, **£2,050 No offers.**
07788 990608.
Kidderminster.

HYUNDAI 1.2 ACTIVE petrol, 2011, 30,000 miles, MoT March. £30 year tax. Immaculate, lady owner, silver. £3,975. 01902 601601.

HYUNDAI COUPE 2.0SE Auto, 2004, 28,000 miles, needs to be viewed, excellent condition. £2,000 ono. 01902 741598.

KIA PICANTO 1
59 plate, MoT'd April, full main dealer SH, just over 14,000 miles only, rear tinted windows, £30 per year tax, immaculate condition, ideal 1st car.
£4,150 ono.
07752 065437, 01384 390034.

MAZDA MX5
convertible, 04 reg., long MOT, 64,000 miles, good condition, bargain,
£2,575 o.n.o.
Telephone 07864 842076.

MINI CONVERTIBLE 06, black, full MoT, SH, usual extras, lovely condition. £3,300. Part ex considered. 01384 440258. 07935 337167.

MINI COOPER S, grey, 2005, 12 months MoT, low mileage, FSH, showroom condition, £2,650 bargain. 07503 670510.

VAUXHALL INSIGNIA SE AUTO DIESEL 2010, 51,000 miles, MoT'd, FSH, £5,950 ono. 01902 635871 / 07711 831004.

cars under £1500

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

BMW 520SE Estate, Auto, 52 plate, blue, 109k, MoT, FSH, 17" black alloys, black leather, excellent condition, £1,500 ono. 07957 230974.

CHEVROLET MATIZ 1.0SE, 57 plate, met silver, 5 door, 47,095 miles, MoT Jan, fsh, e/w, a/c, pas, CD, £1,400 ono. 07767 221613.

CITROEN SAXO FORTE 2002, 81,000 miles, white, MoT, sun roof£500 ono. 07870 958856.

DAIHATSU TERIOS 1.3EL 2003, 68,000 miles, long MoT, silver, petrol, abs, air bags, fsh. £1,000 ono 01384 341888.

FORD FIESTA 05, 5dr hatch, 10 months MoT, low mileage, excellent condition in/out £995. 07464 231973.

FORD FIESTA V reg., Zetec, 3-dr, petrol, silver, MoT September 2016, reasonable condition. £350. 01902 744291.

FORD FOCUS, 02 plate, 5 months MoT, high mileage, good condition, sold as seen, £500 ono. 07794 515455.

FORD FOCUS Zetec, TDCi, 2004, silver, full stamped service history, excellent condition, £1,195 o.n.o. 07939 483221.

FORD KA 1300cc, 03 reg, MoT'd, 28,436 miles, three lady owners two of the same Family, Red, £495 ono. 01902 742556.

FORD KA 2000, X reg., 1 years MOT, CD player, cheap tax and insurance, nice condition, £350. 07570 466779.

FORD KA 2001, 11 months MoT, alloy wheels, 55,000 miles, very good condition, £600 ono. 07757 300857.

FORD SIERRA SAPPHIRE GL, 1988, E Reg., 1993cc, gold, 61,666 miles, MoT Dec 9, 2015, good condition, £1,500 o.n.o. 01384 231425.

PEUGEOT 106 1.1 Independent, moonshine blue, MoT until January 13, 64394 miles, two previous owners. £600. 07838 094603.

PEUGEOT 206 2003, good condition, 3 months MoT, 56,000 miles only, £950. 01384 633202.

PEUGEOT 206 Convertible, 2003, nice condition, 11 months MoT, 103,000 miles, £950, o.n.o. 01902 689227 or 07738 252330.

RENAULT CLIO 1.2 5-door, X reg, 49,000 miles only, silver, sun roof, PAS, CL, CD, long MoT, £695. Please call 07779 455916.

RENAULT CLIO Dynamique, 2005, 48k, 2 former keepers, 3 door, a/c, remote CL, PAS, 12 months MoT, £1,375 ono. 07923 132859.

ROVER MGZS +, 52 reg, Saloon, blue, 1,8, 11 months MoT, no rust, £875 ono. May part ex. 07747 740971. 01902 530123.

TOYOTA AVENSIS 1.8, 2000 reg, 4 months MoT, average mileage (150k), very reliable, good condition, £600. 01902 685549.

VW BEETLE 2002, 91,000 miles, silver, electric windows, long MoT, metallic paint, alloys. £1,075 ono. 07754 557861.

VW PASSAT 1.9TDi, 03, low mileage 112,992, MoT February 2016, genuine reason for sale, £1,500 no offers 07516 077895.

classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private cash buyer.Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

commercial vehicles

VAUXHALL COMBI van 1300, 2005, 11 months MoT, 97,000 miles, £750. 07976 701637.

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motorbikes

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07827 446346.

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MOBILE MECHANICS Service & repairs. Headgasket, clutches and cambelts. 07747 848469.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

JACK WILTSHIRE (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of Belvedere Residential Home 41/43 Stourbridge Road Dudley West Midlands DY1 2DH formerly of 3 Romsley Road Stourbridge West Midlands DY9 7NW, who died on 23/08/2015, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned on or before 22/01/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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Almondsbury Bristol BS32 4SD
(Ref: SQU/3677289P/Wiltshire) T4566659

10 Personals

personal

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Give us a ring on 0121 520 3715 to find out more information

ENGLISH GENTLEMAN
58 years of age, car owner, N/S, easy going, reliable, looking for a lady, 40 - 63 ish, for companionship / relationship, (any area). Photo appreciated (will return).
All letters answered.
Box Number P20132 ,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

LADY, 50's
Wishes to meet new friends for socialising.
Bilston area.
Box Number P20135,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

LADY, RETIRED, EARLY 60's
Needs to re start social life. Requires new Friends male and female for dining out, days out and holidays away. Stourbridge and surrounding area's preferred.
Box Number P20129 ,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

RETIRED GENTLEMAN
Looking for an attractive unattached, non smoking Lady, 55 - 63.
I live abroad for the whole of the summer and would like to share my adventures with someone who is caring with a GSOH. Possible Friendship / Long term relationship.
Box Number C20134,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH FEMALE REQUIRED
Are you looking for a serious, long term, very loving relationship with a young 67 year old man, totally single?
If so, I am romantic, single, loyal and passionate.
Female age preferred 30-50 years.
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Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

sports clubs

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Stourport League.
Saturday Morning matches.
Please contact Alistair 07764 655036.

WIGHTWICK WARRIORS
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Saturday, November 21, at 2pm.
At Ashmore Park Playing Fields, Griffiths Drive,
Please bring your own kit, shin pads, etc.
You can just turn up or contact Sean on 07756 229153.

WITHYMOOR COLTS
Charter Standard Community Status Club.
All Managers minimum FA Level 1 and CRC Checked.
The following Teams are looking for Players to join their current squads:
U9's West require GOALKEEPER / OUTFIELD PLAYERS.
Call Daniel, 07767 684557.
U15's Girls require OUTFIELD PLAYERS.
Call Sean, 07935 464079.

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Selected weekend departures
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Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing. For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. For the Saturday Night option see the evening performance.

Both breaks include a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel plus full English breakfast.
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**The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details.*

Single rooms subject to availability – supplement applies.

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For a theatre brochure call the Promotions team on (01902) 319999 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm), or go to expressandstar.com/starextratravel

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

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FREE Standard Network rates apply.

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Or ***Text...*** **REPLY26** (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26** 123456 **hi get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully forwarded messages cost £1.50 per message (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

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Women seeking men

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

LADY, young looking 57, working full-time, very fit and active, looking for a male of similar age for friendship or maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 4444 Box No: 419725**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 4294 Box 419673**

CATHY, 42, good looking brunette with a real passion for life, seeking male for happy times, dates, chats, romance and more. Pls call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420073**

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. Pls call, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 4299 Box 418167**

MAGGIE, 72 yrs young, good sense of humour, well presented, WLTM kind, sincere chappie to share coffee and a chat. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5310040**

CHRISTINA, curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. **Tel No: 0906 515 4293 Box 410127**

LOUISE 35, dark hair, blue eyes, attractive ex air hostess, looking for fun times with older male for romantic nights in and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420043**

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 4275 Box: 405297**

39 yr old independent single Mom, knows the benefit of having a good man in the picture. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5084796**

ATTRACTIVE solvent business woman, 36yrs, seeks discreet gent any age for no strings discreet fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 4693 Box 419701**

FRANCES, 45, busty female, loves nights in/out, seeking uncomplicated male who can occupy my free time for quality companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420003**

LOUISE, pretty hairdresser, works long hours, finds it hard to meet a boyfriend, 34yrs, own flat. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4192572**

FEMALE, seeks fun loving male who likes a drink and a laugh, to enjoy erotic experiences with a curvy brunette. Discretion guaranteed. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5079311**

JENNI, single mum seeks single dad, own home, can accommodate and loves spoiling her man. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4115108**

MARY, pretty, friendly, lots of fun, lives in Kidderminster, loves the theatre, opera, ballet, WLTM a lovely, charming, funny, genuine guy, 30s, to settle down with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419883**

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416287**

LOU, 45, lives in Shrewsbury, WLTM a lady between 42-49 with blue eyes, must be kind, caring and funny to mend my broken heart, someone who likes to curl up on the sofa for cozy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419855**

FREYA 24yr old single mum, looking for male for free time frolics, call me if you're interested, it could be fun! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419851**

LISA 38 slim attractive blonde, looking for a man who will appreciate a feminine, fashionable, fun, romantic sensual woman with a mind of her own. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419839**

SARAH 38, slim, nice looking, sensual, tactile, no ties, WLTM kind, loving male to enjoy affectionate relationship. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419821**

PAT 66, attractive, N/S, likes reading, nights out, seeks gent for friendship, days out and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418277**

68YR old widow, attractive, seeks sincere, N/S male, likes reading, meals out and walks. West Midlands. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414773**

JULIA 47, looking for genuine, reasonably attractive male friend, may to lead to more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419695**

LADY Penelope seeks her very own Parker (47-58) to go on a voyage of discovery and romance. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4550237**

BLACK lady seeks white male over 60, any location, for friendship and hopefully a lot more. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4256384**

CHARLENE, 24, petite curvy young blonde seeks similar cheeky, fun loving guy for lots of fun and loving. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419597**

JOANNA, 36, petite, auburn haired female, lovely figure seeks loving older male for fun nights out and cosy nights in. Maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419595**

SHARON 32, attractive black single mum of one, very tactile and passionate, WLTM male 45-65yrs for fun meets. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419579**

MARIE, 43, fun blue-eyed brunette, fit and active, seeks similar male to have a laugh with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419417**

KAREN 50, widow, likes swimming, horse riding, keep fit, clay pigeon shooting, GSOH, N/S, non drinker, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415211**

CURVY, farm girl at heart, 32, 5ft 10, single mum, caring, kind, shy, likes walks, cooking WLTM tactile male farmer for LTR. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5067001**

FEMALE medium build, blonde hair, 5ft 5ins, seeks male, 50-58, GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415429**

WIDOW 50, blonde hair, GSOH, 5ft 5ins, slim, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415767**

MARIE, 43, fun blue-eyed brunette, fit and active, seeks similar male to have a laugh with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419417**

FEMALE 50's, 5ft 5ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, seeks gent with GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415871**

BLUE eyed female, blonde hair, slim, GSOH, loving, caring, understanding, seeking similar male, 55-55. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416989**

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418117**

CAROL Ann, sensitive slim brunette very romantic seeks tall handsome male for fun, friendship and lots of TLC. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419385**

KIRSTEN, 36, attractive, blonde and very bored, seeking open-minded decent male for fun/friendship, 40-60yrs. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419383**

VAL 41, pretty, cuddly, flirty, seeks similar fun loving male for an uncomplicated no strings relationship. Age/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416601**

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416287**

SUSANNAH, 48, curvy female, romantic, warm and cuddly, seeks similar kind male for a loving relationship with lots of cuddles and kisses. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417341**

MID naughty forties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you wont be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109**

DIVORCED female, attractive, sensual by nature, OHAC, bored with own company, looking to make life a little more exciting with likeminded man. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419219**

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

JANE, 47, voluptuous female, long hair, brown eyes, generous curves, would love to spend cosy nights in with that special male. Age/looks unimportant, **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417985**

LINDA, 47, brown-eyed blonde, caring, loving and honest, many interests, seeks genuine male to share lonely evenings with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417211**

JOYCE, affectionate sensitive widow, bit of a romantic, seeks loving male for lots of TLC. Looks unimportant, it's what's in the heart that matters. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419143**

DEBBIE, 29, looking for mature professional fun guy, 40-50 to spend good times with. Call me, you have nothing to lose. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419075**

CAROL 49, attractive, green eyed blonde, honest warm hearted, n/s with GSOH likes cinema, music, walking, meals out and travel seeking similar male. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4283683**

VIRGINIA, outgoing social female, 24, tall slim and attractive, looking for fun times, maybe more. Can accommodate/travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418845**

HEATHER, well travelled solvent brunette looking to share a large glass of wine and whatever follows with affectionate man friend. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419031**

PAULINE, 49yrs, very attractive, curvy divorcee, affectionate and fun, seeks laid back, sincere male for an uncomplicated, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418925**

LADY young at heart, nice eyes, seeks man 42-52 with good sense of humour. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4881572**

VIRGINIA, outgoing social female, 24, tall slim and attractive, looking for fun times, maybe more. Can accommodate/travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418845**

LOOKING for the right chemistry with country loving gent who like me is looking for some extra fun in their life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418843**

LYN, 43, divorced very lonely single mum, young looking, slim, attractive, WLTM similar male for companionship. Age/looks/Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418795**

SOPHIA very sensual black lady looking to acquire a new distraction with lots of adult fun thrown in for good measure. Race/age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413399**

JAN 35yr old blue eyed blonde, outgoing, friendly, WLTM passionate guy to share good wine, good conversation, flirting and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418609**

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, widow, 50's, likes walks, sight seeing, theatre, meals out, seeks genuine, professional gent, 5ft 9ins plus to make life more enjoyable. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418615**

JAN 35yr old blue eyed blonde, outgoing, friendly, WLTM passionate guy to share good wine, good conversation, flirting and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418609**

SENSUAL tactile, attractive female, long blonde hair, blue eyes, loves travel, wining/dining, WLTM genuine male for mutual companionship. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418587**

BROKEN hearted lady 39 seeks loving male to mend heart age 39/40. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4869116**

KAY, very young 45, fit and active, no ties, seeks similar young at heart, fun male for fun meets. Age/Status/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418577**

VIVACIOUS strawberry blonde who knows just what she wants, looking for caring male for spontaneous fun relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418445**

WENDY, 40, slim, fit, bubbly female looking to meet a tall, slim, fit, mature male who thinks he can keep up. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418369**

JO 55, curvy redhead, loves eating out, theatre, travel, looking for middle-aged prince charming to sweep me off my feet. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4464905**

GENUINE lady looking for genuine male, age 58-60, for friendship and to have a laugh with. So if that's you would love to hear from you. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4537136**

PAT 66, attractive, N/S, likes reading, nights out, seeks gent for friendship, days out and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418277**

68YR old widow, attractive, seeks sincere, N/S male, likes reading, meals out and walks. West Midlands. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414773**

WENDY, 40, slim, fit, bubbly female looking to meet a tall, slim, fit, mature male who thinks he can keep up. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418369**

EILEEN, slim green eyed brunette likes meals out and cosy nights in, seeks tall male who would make her laugh and brighten up her day. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418347**

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416287**

FEMALE seeking gent 55-70, down to earth, nice and intelligent who knows how to treat a lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417195**

YOUNG early 40's female, GSOH, kind, caring, considerate, seeks male for friendship, possible romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410847**

FEMALE, 50, short blond hair, blue eyes, 5ft 10, slim build, looking for a man 50- 55 with salt and pepper hair and GSOH. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4435776**

HEATHER, 34, single very attractive brunette, sensual and interesting, looking to add to life's experiences and adventures with professional male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418193**

JACKIE lonely and looking for male company, 48-65. Need a bit of love and affection? Then I'm your girl, call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418169**

JAN, 47, once bitten twice shy! Looking for non complicated fun times. Attractive, discreet, OHAC, you won't be disappointed. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418089**

EMMA, 43, easygoing female looking to broaden her horizons, WLTM similar male for romantic liaisons. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418009**

SHARON, 48, tall slim attractive, live alone with no ties, love romanticising and WLTM man for good times together, maybe more. Any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417751**

MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283**

SINGLE mom, 40yrs, small, not skinny WLTM single dad aged 39 to 45. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4295299**

FEMALE, 36, looking for a genuine guy to wine and dine me with lots of laughter and fun times. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4758012**

JULIE, attractive early 40's brunette, size 10, varied interests, WLTM male for fun times, good conversations, spoiling and maybe more. status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418007**

TRACY, slim attractive cheerful brunette, enjoys aromatherapy/massage, looking for male who appreciates a feminine, sensual lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417787**

BOSTON female 56 loyal, intelligent, loves history seeks dependable humorous male for friendship. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4751421**

TRACY, slim attractive cheerful brunette, enjoys aromatherapy/massage, looking for male who appreciates a feminine, sensual lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417787**

THEA, 36, extrovert brunette, curly hair, rugby fan, WLTM genuine male who will accept her as she is. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417763**

ATTRACTIVE kind, caring, single lady, loves animals, WLTM uniformed office for genuine, sincere relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417623**

ELLEN 45, attractive, with statuesque curvy figure, looking for an uncomplicated relationship with understanding male friend. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417663**

Men seeking women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

DARREN, 44, slim build, dark brown hair, green eyes, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418809**

MICHAEL, school teacher, very shy and lonely, 42yrs, own home, car, seeks genuine caring lady. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4156561**

STEVE 39, 5ft 9ins, medium build, likes walks, seeks female, slim-medium build, single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396709**

6FT well built guy, nicely groomed looking for fun intimate nights or day with slim/medium build attractive lady 35-55. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5132460**

ALAN, 56 year old builder, muscular build, five foot ten, fit, likes the gym, pubs, clubs and days out, seeks female with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419975**

ATTRACTIVE, fit, sporty, tactile, youthful black male seek relationship with lady. N/S. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4851641**

WIDOWER, quiet, easygoing, slim, 5ft 7 tall, smart, varied interests, seeks slimish lady, 50 to 65 yrs for caring relationship. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4906469**

TIM, easygoing honest male, discreet, unihibited, seeks similar non-conformist averagely attractive, N/S female up to 65. Notts. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 375065**

SUBMISSIVE 44year old WLTM dominant female 25-30 years who enjoys role play with friendship and maybe possible relationship. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5084114**

MARK 40, 5ft 9ins, brown hair/eyes, attractive, good looking, OHAC/business, likes walks, day trips, cinema, seeks similar female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 348239**

PROFESSIONAL male, 41, own business, likes to enjoy life, clubs, pubs, cinema, gym, seeks similar female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 360283**

MALE 45yrs old, self-employed motor trader/mechanic, medium build, green eyes, average looks. I am a nice genuine and honest person looking for similar lady to share a honest permanent relationship and happy times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418709**

GENT 55, slightly mad, but not bad, will make you glad you answered his ad! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408973**

MIKE late 60's fit, active, genuine and generous, very passive seeks assertive lady any age / looks for mutual benefits. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4747481**

STOCKY, bold, unhappily married man, seeks similar very discreet female for exciting rendezvous. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4757315**

ATTRACTIVE tall black male would like to meet female for day time fun and discreet meetings, any age or location. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5077442**

MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283**

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GENTLEMAN, 57, slightly mad but not bad, who will make you ever so glad that you answered his ad! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419307**

ADVENTUROUS 35yr old, slim, dark hair, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

JAMES GSOH, likes theatre, meals out, socialising, seeking easy going female, 35-55. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417469**

PETE 47, enjoys walking, meals out, seeks female, age/looks/status unimportant, with similar interests for adult fun text only. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5063152**

MALE 60s WLTM genuine fun lady, 50/60s nights in or out, likes swimming, walks, music, good food etc for friendship or more. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4852727**

TIM, easygoing honest male, discreet, uninhibited, seeks similar non-conformist averagely attractive, N/S female up to 65. Notts. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 375065**

PAUL 50yrs, Birmingham, with own house and own car, I have a good sense of humour and I like going out, I'm looking for the right girl for friendship/relationship. Call me when you can. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418465**

LEE, 50, seeking an Asian female for discreet fun and maybe more. Dudley area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419401**

ANDREW 53, widower, honest, genuine, caring, tactile, GSOH. Kidderminster based, hoping to love again with a decent loving lady. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4911450**

45 year old male with varied interests WLTM female 35 to 55 for fun and friendship and hopefully more. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4215562**

COLIN 48, kind loving, seeks large cuddly lady 45 to 60 for LTR, love, romance, also like cuddles, kisses and holding hands. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4906088**

TOM, a young 59 active attractive male, 5ft8, slimmish & fit with decent looks & friendly nature, many interests, looking for lady similar age. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4926340**

GENTLEMAN, 57, slightly mad but not bad, who will make you ever so glad that you answered his ad! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419307**

GENUINE caring male, seeks similar female for friendship or possibly more. Aged between 25-39. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4916049**

STEVE young 40, looking for uncomplicated adult fun with any age race female ACA. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4880449**

ANDY 53, widower, honest, genuine, caring, happy tactile, hoping to find love again with a decent loving lady. Kidderminster. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4911450**

TACTILE, romantic guy, height 5ft 6in, loves good food and drinking in or out, dancing, music, conversation and cuddles. Ready for love. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4893329**

TALL attractive professional male, 50, GSOH, looking for some fun, adventure and sparkle. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418951**

MALE seeks affectionate, tactile, no drama, down to earth woman for nights in/out and loads of cuddles. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418695**

COLIN, 48, seeks large cuddly lady between 45-55 for LTR, must like hugs, kisses, cuddles and holding hands. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4906088**

MALE 63, N/S, GSOH, genuine, caring, likes music, travel, meals out, casual drink, seeks female, 50-70 for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416997**

ADVENTUROUS 35yr old, slim, dark hair, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

MALE, 63, caring, easygoing, N/S seeks female 50-70 for friendship and romance. Looks unimportant. Likes occasional drink, eating in/out, cinema and driving. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418893**

COLIN 61, lorry driver, 5'10", blue eyes, kind hearted, romantic, hobbies include growing fuchsia's for showing and I have a vintage tractor that I play with from time to time. Looking for similar who's up for a lot of fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418463**

MALE 63, N/S, honest, GSOH, car owner, seeks female, 55-70 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416817**

SEAN 47, 5ft 8ins, average looks, seeking genuine, honest, caring female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413945**

Men seeking men

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

BI male would like to meet same. 60 to 80 yrs. Must be able to accommodate. Coventry or Birmingham. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4931168**

TALL male 57, seeks older male 60 to 80 for adult fun. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4347071**

TOM young 59 attractive male, decent looking, fit, slimmish, good company & fun loving with many interests, seeking similar male. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4926340**

BI male WLTM same for weekend fun, 60 to 70 years old. Must be able to accommodate. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4931168**

CROSSDRESSER, 50, seeking crossdresser of similar age or older for discreet adult fun in south glos area. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4878545**

Women seeking Women

LONELY mother seeks female friends for enlivening/enlightening coffee chats, likes countryside animals etc. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4860241**

ATTRACTIVE full figure bi lady 58 seeks female of similar age for fun times. Cotswold area. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4636475**

36YR attractive black curvy female seeking boyish female local for relationship. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4483526**

Friends

LUKE 60's, seeking young Asian friend, 20-30's to socialise with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414841**

MODERN young at heart lonely lady, 70's, likes trips out, holidays, seeking similar lady for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410215**

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Runners spoiled for choice with courses

ATHLETES from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club were spoilt for choice at the weekend.

The club athletes had number of races from which to choose, even if local conditions weren't exactly conducive to fast times.

Despite the severe conditions the weekend started at the County Raceway in Stratford Upon Avon with the Shakespeare 10k over two laps of traffic-free tarmac.

Paula Alder was first back for the blue hoops when he came in 121st in 50.15.

Steve Davies clocked a personal best of 52.57 to take 159th and Matt Hawker finished ten places behind him, 169th, in 53.33.

Twenty four hours later another trio took on some more testing terrain and were facing weather conditions that were considerably worse.

Sally McConville competed in the Beckbury Trail race.

This trail is 5.6 miles of off-road running between the villages of Beckbury and Badger and she crossed the line in 59.26 to take 127th place.

And James Wright came home in 1.16.58 in 44th place and Andy Sprague was not too far behind claiming 49th place in 1.18.17 over a more testing course of the Wrekin Wrecker zig-zagging up and down the Wrekin on numerous occasions to complete the 8.1 mile distance.

In far warmer conditions Ingrid Cain put months of training to the test in the Valencia Marathon finishing in a very creditable 4.24.47 to take 11,717th place overall but 32nd in her category.

Single goal negates Old Hales work

OHHC 0 Worcester 1

OLD Halesonians Men's 1st XI put in a gritty performance against runaway leaders Worcester in their Warwick Printing Midlands One league home game but unfortunately came away pointless as they were defeated 1-0.

Against a side averaging five goals a game and with a 100 per cent record, Hales knew they were in for a battle and one where they had to do without top scorer Tom Bulteel .

To add to their problems Cole Hickman had to pull out five minutes into the game with sight problems. Hales, though, more than held their own against their opponents and showed again why they have one of the league's best defensive records.

Despite Worcester's creativity, they struggled to unlock a tight Hales backline.

Worcester mainly looked to score from short corners, but were denied by keeper Steve Charlton, goal line clearances from Paul Woodall and Mark Curzon and blocks by Chris Wattley and Ben Hughes.

Hales should have scored late on in the first half, when Ash Greaves was played in in front of goal.

Worcester's pressure eventually paid off early in the second period, when a short corner was rocketed into the top corner of the net. Hales tried hard to get back into the game, with Tom Durnford's short corner effort saved by the opposition keeper, but their efforts were not to be enough as they struggled to create enough chances.

There were plenty of positives to take from the game.They travel to recently-relegated Hampton-In-Arden on Saturday.

Other club sides fared better, with both the fifth team and the youngsters in the Badgers recording victories and the 3rd XI drawing, but the 2nd XI and Ladies sides were both defeated.

Stourport 8 Ladies 1st XI 0
Solihull Blossomfield 4 Mens 2nd XI 3
Mens 3rd XI 2 Stratford 2
Khalsa 1 Mens 5th XI 3
Badgers XI 6 Evesham 1

Yozza picks up his fifth darts ranking title in classic

TIPTON'S Jamie Hughes picked up his fifth BDO ranking title after going all of the way in the Jersey Classic at the weekend.

The Black Country thrower also reached the semi-finals of the Jersey Open during the three-day festival at the Royal Hotel St Helier, writes Craig Birch.

Hughes bowed out of the Open to a formidable Darryl Fitton, who was in imperious form as he claimed a 4-1 victory.

But there was no stopping 'Yozza' in the Classic, going up the gears from the last 32 when he put out Jersey's Edward Le Bailly 4-1.

Another impressive 4-1 victory over Martin Atkins put him into the quarter-finals, where he whitewashed former world champion Andy Fordham 4-0.

A close-run last four clash with Welshman Jim Williams saw him nudge through to the final 4-3, setting up the decider with Scott Waites, who he beat 5-4.

Hughes, who is ranked No 4 with the BDO, is preparing to return to the World Championship at Lakeside, having made his debut there at the start of the year.

He'll need to see off Scotland's Ross Montgomery to emulate his second round run and meet either Gary Robson or Madars Razma in the next phase.

Hughes was instrumental in England winning in Turkey recently where he was part of a quartet of darters who were going for broke.

It was Hughes' debut in the competition and he helped to win the team title and keep the overall crown.

Lions can't quite get grip on game

Stafford 11 Stourbridge Lions 7

AFTER an already up and down season from the Lions, they went into this game with Stafford confident.

The Lions thought they could build on the previous week's win against Shrewsbury and produce a settled performance.

Despite the awful weather conditions, early signs were positive, with 95 per cent of the first 20 minutes being played in the Stafford half, even with the Lions playing into the wind.

What started to become worrying was the number of chances that went begging for Stour five metres out from the line by trying to force one too many passes rather than recycling the ball and continuing the phases.

Almost Stafford's first entry into the Lion's half, after about 25 minutes, produced a shot at goal, however this drifted wide.

Just before half time Stafford gained some momentum by playing the phases through some strong forward carries, which took them into Stour's 22 and after a couple of minutes of valiant Lion's defending on their line, the pressure was too much and a Stafford forward bundled over for a try.

Contest

Shell shocked Stour suddenly found themselves 0-5 down at half time, knowing that the 20-25 points had gone begging for them, which on a day like this would have taken the game out of a contest.

Stourbridge came out strongly in the second half and again got themselves into good positions but unfortunately the story was the same with mistakes occurring at vital moments.

Stafford to their credit, despite their very limited game plan, took their chances and managed to nudge their lead further ahead on two occasions throughout the second half with two penalties, the second of which was a superb kick against the wind on the angle.

The Lions never gave up, which was good to see and their efforts were finally rewarded with the last play of the game with good interplay between both the backs and forwards.

The play was finally finished off well by Tibbetts in the corner, followed by a great touchline conversation from Wilson. The game finished 7-11.

Brummies sign teenager Jack

From left, Graham Drury, new signing Jack Smith and Tony Mole. *Pic Claire Swatman.*

TEENAGE hotshot Jack Smith has become the second member of Birmingham's 2016 septet.

The 16-year-old joins fellow youngster Jack Parkinson-Blackburn on a 3.00 average with the pair expected to begin next season as the Surestop Brummies' reserve duo.

Smith guested for the Perry Barr outfit in their final seven meetings of the 2015 campaign and became a popular individual amongst supporters.

The Stoke-on-Trent based rider made an instant impression on club bosses and team manager Graham Drury is delighted to have him on board for next season.

Drury said: "After showing some real encouraging signs and plenty of potential when he guested for us, Jack was always a priority for our team building for 2016. His gating was particularly impressive and he seemed to get better every time we saw him.

"The progress he made in those few weeks was very promising and I'm really excited to have him on board.

"He's in Australia where he's putting in plenty of practice and will be competing in at least ten meetings so he couldn't be any better prepared."

We deserve success, says Chambers

SKIPPER Adam Chambers believes Walsall deserve success this season.

The in-form Saddlers currently sit top of the League One table with 32 points from their opening 16 games.

"There have been some ups and downs throughout my time here but I think the standard has now risen," Chambers said.

"It's been a long journey but for me, you can see that improvement. The standard of player has risen and players that have come in have flourished in the environment here. Some of them were out of the game or not playing but they have come here, worked with the staff and we have got the best out of them."

"The club has done some big things over the past few years and has really moved forward. The fans, the staff, the office staff, the chairman - they all deserve success."

Glassboys Cup ticket details out

STOURBRIDGE have announced ticket sales for the FA Cup second round tie against Eastleigh.

Tickets for the December 5 fixture will go on sale to season ticket holders and members on Sunday from 10am until 1pm and next Monday from 7-10pm at the War Memorial Ground.

Seating in the main stand will cost £15. Adult standing will also cost £15 or £10 for OAPs and children.

The club said there will be a maximum amount of 170 standing tickets only available for The Shed End.

There will also be a restricted amount of unreserved seating available in the Main Stand.

Tickets will be sold on a first-come-first-served basis.

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An Express & Star supplement

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Fightback lets the Yeltz share points

Halesowen Town 1 Barwell 1

HALESOWEN shared the points with Barwell after lively forward Keyon Reffell led a second-half fight-back.

The visitors started brightly and edged the first half with Callum Woodward firing an early shot just wide.

Halesowen's only real effort of the first period came from Aaron Daniels, but he shot weakly at Liam Castle after being set up by Danny Bragoli in a neat 8th minute move.

Barwell snatched the 27th minute lead when Anthony Carney gained possession from home captain Jay Denny and drove a terrific 25 yard shot into the bottom corner of the net.

Eddy Nisevic and Jamie Towers went close in further Barwell pressure before the interval.

Halesowen stepped up a gear in the second half and Reece Hales set the tone by curling a 47th minute free-kick just wide. Reffell struck the side-netting and then squared the ball for Bragoli to plant just wide.

The Yeltz escaped as Carney struck the cross bar in the 54th minute and the visitors paid the price when Reffell cracked a wide-angled shot across Castle into the bottom corner for the 62nd minute equaliser.

In the final minute home substitute Jean-Michel Gueyes elected to play the ball out wide to Isaac Cooper instead of taking the opportunity to shoot and Cooper's cross was cleared calmly.

Halesowen: Platt; Connolly, Cooper, Denny (c), Morrison, Westwood, Charlton, Bragoli, Reffell, Daniels (Waite 73), Hales (Gueyes 77).Barwell: Castle; Lower, Nisevic, Kay, D. Towers, Lavery (c), Tomkinson, Woodward (Gaunt 84), J. Towers (Christie 77), Hickey (Julian 67), Carney.

Villa's defender Amavi is ruled out for rest of season

VILLA defender Jordan Amavi will miss the rest of the season with a cruciate knee ligament injury.

The 21-year-old suffered the injury during France Under-21s' win over Northern Ireland on Thursday.

A Villa statement read: "Aston Villa can confirm defender Jordan Amavi has been ruled out for the rest of the 2015-16 Premier League season with a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee.

"Everyone at the club wishes Jordan a speedy recovery and we look forward to seeing him back on a football pitch as soon as possible."

The left-back was injured after making a challenge in the second half of the European Under-21 qualifier in Guingamp.

Losing Amavi is a significant blow to new Villa boss Remi Garde, who replaced Tim Sherwood earlier this month.

Amavi has made 12 appearances since joining from Nice in the summer and was recalled by Garde for his first game in charge as Villa drew 0-0 with Manchester City immediately prior to the international break.

Old Hales dominate in bad conditions

Rugby

Bromsgrove 5 Old Halesonians 10

THE game at Finstall Park was punctuated with handling errors from both sides all afternoon.

Old Hales took the game to Bromsgrove early on and their scrum was a dominant force.

After several forays into the Bromsgrove 22 Old Hales fly half Tom Harris jinked his way to the try line only to lose control of the ball as he dived over.

Bromsgrove's kicking game played a big part in turning the game around and they had the better of the second quarter.

Old Hales defended well, particularly Sol Rogers who was in the action all over the pitch. Finally, the Bromsgrove pressure paid off and their No.7 exploited a gap to score after 26 minutes. The remainder of the half was scoreless.

Old Hales started the second half with more purpose and managed to put a few decent moves together.

After 54 minutes play one of the Bromsgrove's props was shown a yellow card. Two minutes later a Bromsgrove player suffered a serious knee injury which required an ambulance. After a short break the game resumed on another pitch.

With a prop in the sin bin Bromsgrove were unable to field a full front row so the scrums became uncontested and Old Hales dominance in this department was nullified.

However, from an attacking scrum the Harris brothers weaved their magic. Scrum half Chris Harris passed the ball to Tom Harris who slipped the ball back to his brother on the run around. A well-timed inside pass from Chris found Jon Harris to score a well worked try.

With the scores level Old Hales team were revitalised. Louis Madican caught the ball in midflight and landed over the line for a try.

NO EASY RIDE FOR GLASSBOYS

Stourbridge 2 Carlton Town 0

STOURBRIDGE put aside their current FA Cup heroics to make further progress in the FA Trophy, but made hard work of putting lower-level Carlton Town to the sword.

The Nottingham side's goal-led a charmed life at times as Stourbridge attacked constantly throughout the game, but had to wait until the 67th minute before they finally broke the deadlock.

Glassboys manager Gary Hackett admitted: "It was a complete role-reversal to last week's FA Cup win at Dover Athletic. It was only a matter of time before we scored and once we got that first goal, the result was never in doubt.

"We got to the by-line and crossed on so many occasions that we should have scored more and once that first goal went in, then the floodgates could have easily opened."

Hackett was also wary of injuries picked up by his players. Talisman midfield player Leon Broadhurst limped off after just 19 minutes with a thigh strain while Tom Tonks sustained a hamstring niggle, both players being brought off immediately.

Authority

Stourbridge stamped their authority on the game to such an extent that Glassboys goalkeeper Lewis Solly didn't have a single shot to save in a completely one-sided first half when Carlton struggled to get out of their own territory.

The Glassboys should have taken a 10th-minute lead when livewire Chris Lait carved his way through Carlton's defence and set up striker Karl Hawley in front of goal, but somehow the former Carlisle United marksman put the ball wide.

Carlton struggled to cope with the pace of Lait and Matt Dodd down either flank, a point that wouldn't have gone unnoticed by watching Eastleigh scouts.

Stourbridge continued their high-tempo play after the break, but to no effect, and Carlton provided a reminder of the threat they posed when in a rare attack Jacob Sturgess fired a shot into the side-netting.

Justin Richards on the end of a tough challenge from Connor Green

Further evidence of a possible Carlton smash-and-grab raid followed when giant substitute striker Kevin Lusamba suddenly found himself in the clear after coming on in the 61st minute.

Luckily for Stourbridge, Lewis Solly was aware of the danger and came off his line to take sufficient sting out of Lusamba's shot to enable defender Kristian Green to get back and clear. It was the only save Solly had to make throughout the entire game.

The breakthrough eventually arrived in the 67th minute when Tonks headed Lait's left-wing corner against the crossbar and the ball cannoned back out for the alert Hawley to react first and fire home.

A second goal soon followed on 76 minutes with probably the best move of the match.

The ball was played through to Justin Richards on the edge of the penalty area, who sucked in the defence before releasing Dodd down the right, who in turn crossed along the face of goal for Lait to lash home.

Stourbridge: Solly; Green (Knight 77), Scarr, Tonks (Wright 82), Smikle, Pierpoint, Dodd, Broadhurst (Billingham 19), Hawley, Richards, Lait. Not used: Clarke, Hayward. Att: 428.

Tipton look more positive with a draw

Wellington 1 Tipton Town 1

TIPTON Town are still without a West Midlands League Premier Division victory this season, but a fine committed performance could be a sign of an imminent upturn in fortunes with Town well worth their point.

Wellington began very much on the front foot, despite a couple of useful Tipton raids forward,

Glen Segust's smart snapshot in only the second minute testing new Tipton keeper, Sebastien Mann.

Matt Williams' reverse shot clipped the Tipton crossbar with keeper, Mann powerless.

Gagandeep Kullar then denied the home club's surge down the left flank and featured prominently in attack for the visitors on 10 minutes. when he made space for Ravi Sangha whose reverse shot might just have given Tipton the lead.

Following a couple of quite useful Tipton raids it was the home side who stormed in front on 18 minutes.

A spell of sustained pressure finally breached the Tipton rearguard when a deep curling left wing cross was nonchalantly headed home by Josh Hunt.

Tipton reacted positively, but had to wait until just shy of the hour-mark and once the hosts' Glen Segust had been sent off, to equalise.

Joe Crawford completed a fine attack down the left flank by squaring the ball to Ravi Sangha to score.

Kullar was having a very positive influence for Tipton and his link-up play with Ravi Sangha created problems for Wellington.

On the stroke of half-time Kullar almost caught out the home club when he suddenly fired from distance, fully 30yards, the ball skidding narrowly wide.

Relief after Lambert is safe from attacks

There were concerns for Albion forward Rickie Lambert when it emerged he was in Paris during the terrorist attacks.

Lambert had travelled to the French capital with his wife during the international break but Albion reassured fans the forward was safe.

Albion tweeted: "The club have spoken to Rickie Lambert. He and his wife are safe."

Meanwhile, the head of the organising committee for Euro 2016 has promised France will take the 'necessary decisions' to ensure next summer's tournament takes place in safety.

★★★

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